



Hunter New England Local Health District Historical Collection **SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT**

Prepared for the Hunter New England Local Health District Health Libraries

by Dr Fiona Starr

Australian Lived Histories

<http://www.australianlivedhistories.com.au>

© 2025

About this report

This report has been prepared solely for use by the Hunter New England Local Health District for the purposes of collection management and interpretation. This document is confidential and contains proprietary intellectual property. No responsibility or liability is accepted by Australian Lived Histories to any party other than the Client, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this document. The author accepts no responsibility for any error or omission in the document which is due to an error or omission in data, information or statements supplied by other parties including the Client. The author has made reasonable attempts to independently verify the information in this document and assume it to be accurate, complete, reliable and current.

Cover image: HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection, with anatomical models (not part of the historical collection), on display at the Gardiner Library, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, NSW, c.2020. Photo: HNE Health Libraries.

Other images: unless otherwise stated, all images in this report were taken by Fiona Starr in March 2025.

Abbreviations & acronyms

HNELHD	Hunter New England Local Health District
MAAS	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney (Powerhouse Museum)
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NLA	National Library of Australia
NMA	National Museum of Australia

Contents

Executive summary	4
Purpose & context	6
What is 'Significance'?	7
Methodology	8
Scope & access	10
Summary description of the organisation & collection	12
History & significance of the organisation & collection	14
Composition of the Collection	19
Relationship between the Collection & buildings	65
Role of the Collection in the community	67
Condition of the Collection	72
Comparative collections	75
Statement of significance	82
Most significant Items	85
Recommendations	86

Executive summary

The following document outlines a Significance Assessment of the Hunter New England (HNE) Health Libraries Historical Collection, which is stored and displayed at the Calvary Mater Hospital Library, Level 4, Mental Health Administration Building, Waratah, NSW (referred to below as the Collection). This Significance Assessment was commissioned in mid-2024 by Cherish McDonald, Librarian, HNE Health Libraries. The aim was to take stock of the collection of historic objects in the Health Libraries collection and to understand their significance in relation to Australian medical history, and to other similar collections held around Australia. It is intended that the assessment and information in this report will help guide the planning and allocation of future resources for collection management and development, conservation, community engagement, learning programs and interpretation.

This Significance Assessment report (referred to below as the Assessment) provides an analysis of the values, meaning and context of the Collection. It summarises how and why the Collection is important, drawing attention to its strengths and the challenges for its management. The Collection is assessed according to a framework of eight criteria, following a standardised process that is widely recognised in the museums and archives sector.

The Assessment was undertaken in March-April 2025 by Dr Fiona Starr of Australian Lived Histories (referred to below as the Assessor), including one full-day site visit on 29 March 2025 to view and photograph the collection and meet and consult with Cherish McDonald. Further consultation was made through follow-up telephone and email conversations, and the findings of the visit and discussions are detailed in this report.

The HNE Historical Collection (also referred to below as the Collection) is a rich archive of two distinct sub-collections which represent the themes of medical care, progress and curiosity. One sub-collection is the book and notebook collection of John Irvine Hunter (1898-1924), Challis Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney (1923-4). The other is a collection of diverse materials relating to the history of health care in the Hunter region of NSW. Major object categories include books, ephemera, photographs, documents, and medical instruments and equipment. The collection is owned and managed by the HNE Health Libraries, where it is cared for in an air-conditioned library environment, by professional librarians. Much of the collection was photographed and listed in a Word document in 2022, but the items have not been assigned catalogue numbers. The Collection is stored and displayed in dedicated spaces where it can be accessed by hospital staff and students, within the Mater Hospital, a full-function public hospital.

The John Irvine Hunter sub-collection of books and documents, forms about half of the Collection. It relates to a highly significant individual in Australia's medical history – Professor John Irvine Hunter (referred to below as JIH), one of the three doctors after which the John Hunter Hospital at Newcastle was named. a brilliant medical academic who was appointed Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney Medical Faculty, when he was only 22 years old. Hunter was the youngest person ever to be appointed to a professorship at the University and is recognised internationally for his contribution to the research and teaching of anatomy. His brief life and important work have earned him status as a legend, and he is considered one of the greatest minds, and 'most prominent and inspiring figures'¹ in

¹ Sean Barrett and Goran Strkalj, 'John Irvine Hunter (1898-1924): Australian Anatomist and Medical Educator', *Acta Medica Academica* 49, no. 1 (2020): 84-90.

Australian medical history. His book and document collection held by the HNE Health Library is therefore of national significance, and arguably, even international significance, for its association with this important individual, whose academic connections took him to the US, UK and continental Europe. It is also scientifically significant for the enormous research potential it offers to reveal more about the life, work and legacy of John Irvine Hunter and his contribution to Australian medical history. The books, notebooks and memorial plaque are rare, in very good condition, and have considerable educational and interpretive potential.

The other half of the Collection is also highly significant, as it includes numerous rare medical books, and medical instruments and equipment from the late nineteenth to late twentieth century. Of particular note is the group of items transferred to the collection from the James Fletcher Hospital (formerly the Newcastle Mental Asylum). These items reflect the history and development of one of Australia's earliest mental health institutions and the longest established mental health site in continuous use in NSW (and possibly, Australia). This sub-collection is historically, socially and scientifically significant, documenting the development of and the provision of mental health care for the people of the Hunter region of NSW – one of Australia's earliest satellite colonial settlements. It offers fascinating insight, particularly into the historical use of electro-convulsive therapy and straitjackets in mental health treatment. Potentially thousands of people have been treated with the objects represented in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection, giving them social significance relating to the influence they had on community health.

A survey of comparative material in collections around Australia, United Kingdom and United States, has confirmed that some duplicate or similar rare medical books and historical medical instruments and equipment such as those in the HNE Collection are held in several other collections. However, the comparison has also demonstrated that many items in the HNE Collection are rare and in excellent condition. Also, unlike many examples in other collections which have lost their provenance, the examples in the HNE Collection have great research potential, since many are provenanced to several important individuals and to the Newcastle Mental Hospital, which played a leading role in the development of innovative and progressive approaches to mental health care.

The materials in the HNE Collection reflect the dedication of countless individuals to the service of progressive and best-practice health care in the Hunter New England region and beyond. The Collection therefore holds great potential to assist the HNE Health Libraries with educating healthcare professionals and the general public about the unique history and crucial role that John Irvine Hunter and the HNELHD hospitals have played in Australia's medical history.

This report provides strategic recommendations for the future management, access, storage, display and interpretation of the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection. Of highest priority is the suggestion for HNELHD to seek further funding to support collection management projects such as collection policy writing and form creation, cataloguing, conservation of highly significant items, purchase of appropriate acid-free storage materials, and digitisation.

Purpose & context

This Significance Assessment was commissioned in 2024 by the HNE Health Libraries – custodian of the HNE Health Libraries historical collection.

The purpose of this report is to outline the historic object holdings in the Collection and to discuss and assess their significance. It will present an analysis of the types of items included in the collection, consider their role in Australia's history and in the history of the Hunter-New England Region. It will discuss their significance for the community today and make recommendations for the ongoing management, interpretation, preservation, storage and display of the collection. The significance assessment process, and this report, are intended to assist the HNE Health Libraries to manage the Collection according to best-practice principles and to make the best use of the Collection for community engagement and education.

The HNE Health Libraries historical collection, part of the Hunter-New England Local Health District, is an agency of the NSW State Government. The Collection was established in the mid-1990s, with half being based on the professional and private library of Professor John Irvine Hunter. The museum display established in 1994 was located in the Gardiner Library in the John Hunter Hospital and exhibited a selection of the most interesting and well-preserved items from the collection. This display was dismantled in 2022 and the historical collection transferred to the Calvary Mater Hospital library.

All items in the Collection are owned by HNE Health Libraries and the HNELHD.



Calvary Mater Hospital, Waratah, NSW. Photo: <https://hunterlifestyle.com.au/2022/03/the-mater-spirit/>

What is 'significance'?

The term 'significance' refers to the values we assign to objects, other than their financial value. These values can be historical, social, spiritual, scientific, aesthetic or by association with an important person or group of people. Objects can be significant if they are rare, or represent a type of object, or if they are especially well preserved. Significance is not fixed and can change according to changing attitudes and perspectives of communities, and other cultural, political, scientific and environmental developments.

Assessing the values of objects in the collections of museum, galleries, archives and other keeping places, gives a meaning to the items and the whole collection. In every collection, there is a backlog of items needing conservation, cataloguing and research, and most collecting organisations face difficult decisions about which objects deserve priority treatment. Which items should be collected, conserved, researched, displayed, digitised and interpreted? A Significance Assessment provides a better understanding of the collection and guides this decision-making process. It brings together information about the collection and its history, provides advice on best practice collection management, and identifies the role and importance of the collection for the community. It helps to answer which parts of the collection are most important and deserve to have resources allocated to them, which are best for display and interpretation, and which are less important or relevant to the objectives of the organisation.

The process of assessing the value of an object includes the individual significance and its value to the collection. This involves the following stages:

- analysing an object or collection
- researching its history, provenance and context
- comparing with similar collections
- understanding its values by reference to standard criteria
- summarising its meanings and values in a statement of significance.

The standard criteria are outlined in *Significance 2.0*, the museum sector's standard framework and guide for assessing significance.² The criteria are:

- historic significance
- artistic or aesthetic significance
- scientific or research potential
- social or spiritual significance

Four comparative criteria are also used to evaluate the degree of significance:

- Provenance
- Rarity or representativeness
- Condition or completeness
- Interpretive capacity

² R. Russell and K. Winkworth (2009) *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections*, Collections Council of Australia.

Methodology

The Assessment undertaken in 2025 for the HNE Health Libraries employed the processes outlined in *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections*, and this report follows the format recommended by the National Library of Australia. The Assessment of the Collection was conducted according to the following process:

1. Background reading: about the history of HNE Local Health District (HNELHD) and Professor John Irvine Hunter, through online and in-print sources.
2. Site visit: to the HNE Health Library at Mater Hospital, Newcastle, on 28 March 2025. This visit involved meeting with Cherish McDonald, viewing the stored collection and library displays, unboxing/unwrapping items to photograph them, and observing the collection condition and storage/display environment. Over 1100 photographs were taken, and copies obtained of relevant historical information and collection documentation.
3. Consultation: Key stakeholders were contacted to provide written statements about their involvement and interest in the collection. Questions included those about the creation, function, history and meaning of the objects, historical context, provenance, and current values to the individuals and community, to find quotes re the importance of the Collection for the community. The following individuals were consulted and/or responded to the invitation:

- Cherish McDonald – Librarian, HNE Health Libraries
- Angela Smith – Library Manager, HNE Health Libraries
- Evadne Lewis – Librarian, HNE Health Libraries
- Julia Gollan – E-resources librarian, HNE Health Libraries
- Erin Daley – Volunteer Manager, Hunter New England Mental Health Volunteer Service
- Julie Tait – Executive General Manager, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle
- Professor David Hunter – Richard Doll Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine, Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford, UK
- Emeritus Professor William Walters – former Professor of Reproductive Medicine, University of Newcastle; Chairman of the Division of Obstetrics-Gynaecology, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle
- Emeritus Professor (Kichu) R. Nair Balakrishnan AM – Professor of Medicine, University of Newcastle
- Dr Sean Barrett – Department of Medical Imaging, The Canberra Hospital, ACT
- Professor Goran Strkalj – Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW
- Professor Luke Henderson – Professor in Anatomy & Histology, University of Sydney
- Denise Donlon – Curator, J.L. Shellshear Museum, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney
- Marcus Robinson – Curator, J.T. Wilson Museum, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney
- Dr Ross Kerridge – former Director of Anaesthesiology, current Mayor of Newcastle
- Dr Richard Addinall – retired surgeon, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle

- Dr Ann Hardy – University of Newcastle
 - Professor Catharine Coleborne – Associate Dean Research (Interim), College of Human and Social Futures, University of Newcastle
 - Paige Wright – Manager, Special Collections, Newcastle University
 - Iain Wallace, School Archivist, Fort Street High School, Petersham, NSW
 - Stephen Williamson, Curator, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT
4. Comparative collection survey: an extensive online search was conducted to identify comparative objects and collections around Australia for this Assessment. When further information was required, collection managers were contacted by email and telephone. E Hive and Trove online databases were searched generally, and numerous collecting institutions and organisations were identified and/or contacted.
 5. Documentation: Compiling photographs and listing of items on a spreadsheet to help piece together the subcollections and donation groups, to understand their relationships to former owners.
 6. Collection research: detailed research into individual collection items.
 7. Analysis: Compiling and processing all the resources and information collected, focusing on the most important items in the collection and considering samples of the remainder as representative examples, comparing the collection to other surveyed collections and identifying the most significant items in the collection.
 8. Writing: Statement of significance and report writing.



Scope & access

This Significance Assessment report relates to the HNELHD Historic Collection, which is stored and displayed at the Calvary Mater Hospital library, Waratah, NSW. During the site visit, the Assessor worked with Cherish McDonald to examine the following collection sub-sets and object types – books, documents, photographs, framed plans, medical instruments and equipment. The relatively small size of the Collection meant that the entire Collection could be viewed and photographed for this Assessment.

Physical access to the collection items was straightforward at the time of the site visit for this Assessment. Most books and other objects in the Collection were stored in cardboard archive boxes (most items wrapped in bubble wrap secured with sticky tape), with contents lists in each box. The boxes were stored on desks in an empty area of the office within the Calvary Mater Hospital Library. These boxes have been stored there since their removal from the Gardiner Library at the John Hunter Hospital, where the items were on display between 1994 and 2021. The display was dismantled because the Gardiner Library was decommissioned in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the space could be taken over as a vaccination clinic.

Mainly, items donated together are stored together, except for a few examples. A list of most of the items in the boxes was created by library staff in 2022, when they were removed from display at the John Hunter Library. This list includes the names of donors for many of the objects, however, the donors of some of the books and objects remain uncertain. Unfortunately, there is no surviving list of the John Irvine Hunter books donated to the library in 1994, so there is now some confusion about a few books as to whether they were part of this collection or acquired from other donors. Little research or related historical information documentation existed for most of the Collection. Where possible, the names on objects were researched for this Assessment.

The remainder of the collection is stored and presented on open display shelves around the Mater Hospital library, and these items include one straitjacket, electro-convulsive therapy machines, and other historical medical equipment. It is estimated that five per cent of the collection is currently on display.



Straitjacket on display at the HNE Health Libraries, Mater Hospital Library, March 2025.



Left: HNE Health Libraries librarian Cherish McDonald with the display of ECT machines, Mater Hospital Library, March 2025; Right: Mater Hospital library office area where the Collection was stored, March 2025.

Summary description of the organisation & collection

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection discussed in this report is owned and managed by HNE Local Health District, an agency of the NSW State Government. The Collection is stored and displayed at the Mater Hospital Library and predominantly chronicles the history of two distinct aspects of Australian medical history – the life and work of John Irvine Hunter, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney, and the history of health care in the Hunter New England region of NSW.

The Collection was established in about 1991, when the Gardiner Library was established at the newly constructed John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle. The books and notebooks of John Irvine Hunter were donated in 1994-5, and the collection then continued to develop through miscellaneous donations received from former hospital staff and community members.

The John Irvine Hunter collection consists of over 40 books, including those owned by Hunter (and his son Irvine John Hunter) and more modern biographical books about John Hunter. This sub-collection also includes two unique notebooks made by Hunter while studying medicine at the University of Sydney in 1914-5. There are also two scrapbook-travel diaries, made by Hunter while visiting the UK and continental Europe in 1923-4. This collection also includes a memorial plaque bronze sculpture made by Rayner Hoff, to commemorate Hunter's life.

The remainder of the collection relates to the history of medical care in the Newcastle region. This includes sub-sets of groups of items donated by retired doctors and transferred from department of the hospital and organisation. There are diverse materials in this part of the Collection, including antiquarian books, documents, photographic prints, printed ephemera, photographic slides, and medical equipment (made from metal, glass, wood, textiles, and plastic). Perhaps the most interesting group within this sub-set is the material transferred from the James Fletcher Hospital (formerly the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane/Newcastle Mental Hospital). This includes numerous electro-convulsive machines and straitjackets. Other sub-sets include rare books, a group of obstetrics instruments, microscopes, and anaesthetics equipment.

The Collection addresses the following broad historical themes:

- Australian medical history
- Tertiary medical education history
- Mental health care history

The collection items also relate to the following specific historical themes:

- The life and work of Professor John Irvine Hunter
- University of Sydney Medical School history
- Medical treatment in the Hunter-New England region
- Mental health treatment at the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane / James Fletcher Hospital

The historical items have been carefully curated by the library staff of the HNE Health Libraries; however, they remain uncatalogued. Many items in the collection have clear donor details and/or carry the names of the people who once owned them, but little research had been conducted. This Assessment represents the first time that a compilation of the disparate historical collection has been formally discussed and assessed as a whole.



The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection on display at the Gardiner Library, 2000s. Photos: HNE Health Libraries.



History & significance of the organisation & collection

The organisations represented in the HNE Health Libraries historical collection are primarily the University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine, Wesley College, the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane (James Fletcher Hospital) and the John Hunter Hospital. The history and significance of these organisations and the collection itself are detailed below.

University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine

The University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine was established in 1856, initially for the purpose of conducting examinations for the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Medicine. Twenty-five years later the Medical School opened to train doctors for the growing population of NSW. The thousands of individuals trained at the school have had a lasting legacy for Australian and International health care, with many remarkable medical professionals, administrators and educators passing through the school. In the 1910s, when John Irvine Hunter was studying in the Faculty of Medicine, countless graduates enlisted to serve in the 1st AIF. Since doctors were in high demand, a special final examination for the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery was held in December 1914, to enable fifth year students to volunteer for active service. The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney was the principal and most highly regarded school for medical training for doctors in NSW, if not Australia. During the 1919 influenza epidemic, the Faculty of Medicine played an important role, with medical students assisting local doctors in treating the sick and dying in both hospitals and homes.³

In 1920 Professor James Thomas Wilson became the third Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and who had been appointed the foundation Challis Chair of Anatomy in 1890. Wilson accumulated 24,000 specimens for the 'Museum of Human and Morbid Anatomy'. The oldest remaining specimen in the Museum is a dissection of the heart by Dr G.H.S. Lightoller in 1908. Professor Arthur Edward Mills was the fourth Dean of the Faculty of Medicine from the end of 1920 until 1925. He became a lecturer in the Principles and Practice of Medicine in 1910, and was lecturer to John Irvine Hunter, while he was studying medicine.



Dr Wilkinson and Students in the Medical School Vesalian Theatre of Anatomy (1927), [REF-00011931]. Source: University of Sydney Archives

³ The University of Sydney School of Medicine, History, <https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine/museum/mwmuseum/index.php/History>

Wesley College, University of Sydney

Wesley College was established in 1910 as a College of the Methodist Church in Australia, for the accommodation of students of the University of Sydney. When it opened in 1917, Rev M Scott Fletcher was the first Master, and there were just nine students, including medical student John Irvine Hunter. In 1969 Wesley College became the first co-ed college at The University of Sydney.⁴

Newcastle Hospital for the Insane / Newcastle Mental Hospital

The Newcastle Hospital for the Insane, later known as the Newcastle Mental Hospital and then the James Fletcher Hospital, opened in 1871 in the Newcastle Domain.⁵ The site, and the wider Domain, had been the centre of government authority in Newcastle from the time the town was permanently created on Awabakal land in 1804. The hospital site was previously used for a military barracks and later an Industrial School for Girls. The Newcastle hospital was established as a response to the overcrowding of Sydney's asylums and it was the first of the regional hospitals to be established for this purpose. The Newcastle asylum also addressed the need for a specialist institution in the Hunter region.

This hospital, first named the Newcastle Asylum for Imbeciles and Idiots, was primarily for the mentally ill, but it also housed individuals with intellectual disabilities. This was a significant development for the time, since this hospital was the third such public institution in the world and the first in Australia, to house those with intellectual disabilities, then known as imbeciles and idiots.⁶ It became an experimental asylum which adopted a new approach to people with intellectual disabilities, in an era when the intellectually disabled were usually seen as a problem population to be managed rather than treated. In a recent sensory-historical study,



Women's Asylum, Watt Street Newcastle. Ralph Snowball Collection, Special Collections University of Newcastle. 22 November 1888.

⁴ Wesley College, <https://www.wesleycollege-usyd.edu.au/about-wesley/our-history/#:~:text=Wesley%20College%20was%20established%20by,at%20The%20University%20of%20Sydney>.

⁵ Ann Hardy and Nancy Cushing, 'A Sensory History of the Newcastle Asylum for Imbeciles and Idiots, 1871-1900', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, vol 19 (2017): 139-60.

⁶ Hardy and Cushing, 143.

Frederick Cane, an early Superintendent (1872-89) at Newcastle, had no medical training and relied on alternative forms of treatment, including out-of-doors activities and events. Hardy and Cushing have shown how the patients gathered together in Newcastle were offered opportunities for physical and social engagement. Sensory therapy included singing and listening to music, artworks hung around the common areas, formal and vegetable gardens kept for patient therapy in the hospital grounds, staff-led walks with patients to breathe the sea air and the views the nearby beach and sea, and play sports such as cricket. This approach was much like that pioneered by French physician Eduard Séguin in his school for idiots in Paris in the 1840s.

As Hardy and Cushing noted:

At a time when the merits of offering treatment to those considered incurable, including the intellectually disabled, were still being debated, this asylum [Newcastle] provided a stimulating environment where inmates were actively engaged in work and leisure activities on their own and in the company of the broader community.⁷

Most of the patients to arrive at the newly opened asylum in 1871 were older men transferred from the Tarban Creek (later Gladesville) Asylum in Sydney. Half were married and had worked jobs such as sailors, shepherds, publicans and surveyors. Half of them were had immigrated to Australia (and some had perhaps been transported to the colony as convicts), some were Chinese, and other spoke minimal English. After 1873, epileptics were also admitted to the hospital, which resulted in more young and local patients. From 1871 to 1900 there were over 800 people admitted.⁸

Hardy and Cushing have shown how between 1900 and 1950 the approach changed. with a new focus on education and training. Patients were increasingly kept indoors, although some activities, such as gardening and sport continued outdoors. The institution transitioned from an asylum to a hospital in which people would be subject to medical treatments to try to cure their mental illness. From the 1950s onwards, patients became increasingly passive.

The institution faced challenges but evolved into a key part of the Hunter region's mental health care system. It passed through several name changes over time including:

- 1871 – 1878 Lunatic Asylum for Imbeciles and Institution for Idiots
- 1879 – 1915 Newcastle Hospital for the Insane
- 1916 – 1945 Mental Hospital, Newcastle
- 1946 – 1962 Newcastle Mental Hospital
- 1962 – 1983 Newcastle Psychiatric Centre (also known as Watt Street Mental Hospital)
- 1983 – 1989 Hunter Hospital
- 1989 – current James Fletcher Hospital

⁷ Hardy and Cushing, 139.

⁸ Special Collections, 'Mental Health Milestone – 150 years' <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/10/11/milestone150/>

John Hunter Hospital

The John Hunter Hospital opened in 1991 as a purpose-built hospital for the Hunter region. It is the busiest trauma hospital in NSW. The hospital was named after three men of the name John Hunter - the former governor of NSW and the namesake of the Hunter region; John Hunter, the famed 18th-century surgeon and pioneer of anatomical pathology, and John Irvine Hunter, the Australian Professor of Anatomy who died in 1924 at the age of 26, having already been appointed the youngest anatomy professor at the University of Sydney.⁹

HNE Health Libraries & special collections

The Hunter New England Health Libraries consists of the John Hunter Hospital library (formerly the Gardiner Library), the Calvary Mater Library, and the Tamworth Hospital library. HNE Health Libraries specialise in the provision of medical and health science information to the staff of Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD). The libraries' mission is to provide a 'client-focused, cost-effective and innovative library and information service to improve patient care, teaching, research, innovation and professional development'.¹⁰ Their goals include increasing engagement and improving communication, enhancing access, providing exceptional service and revitalising library spaces.

In addition to their main collection, HNE Health Libraries is custodian of various special collections with historical value, archival and reference potential. This Assessment is concerned with examining the significance of three of these collections - the John Irvine Hunter collection, the historical collection and the historical artefacts.

These three collections, referred to in the report as the Collection, have been established through donations and the ad hoc transfer of medical items and documents from departments and branches of the HNELHD hospitals, and the transfer of the collection between libraries of the LHD. The JIH collection was donated by John Algie and Irvine John Hunter in 1994-5.

The HNE Health Libraries staff created an inventory list of the Collection in the form of a Word document with table, with low resolution images of the objects. The digital files of these photos were not stored on file by the libraries. The management of the Collection is covered by the Hunter New England Health Libraries - Collection Development Policy, which was updated in 2024.¹¹ Very little research has been conducted into the history or provenance of the items in the Collection, with the exception of the baby in a coolamon sculpture. The Collection is currently only accessible by request.

The collection consists of the following estimates of various objects:

- 60 books
- 35 medical instruments and equipment
- 10 Printed ephemera
- 4 maps/plans
- 4 clothing
- 10 Photographs

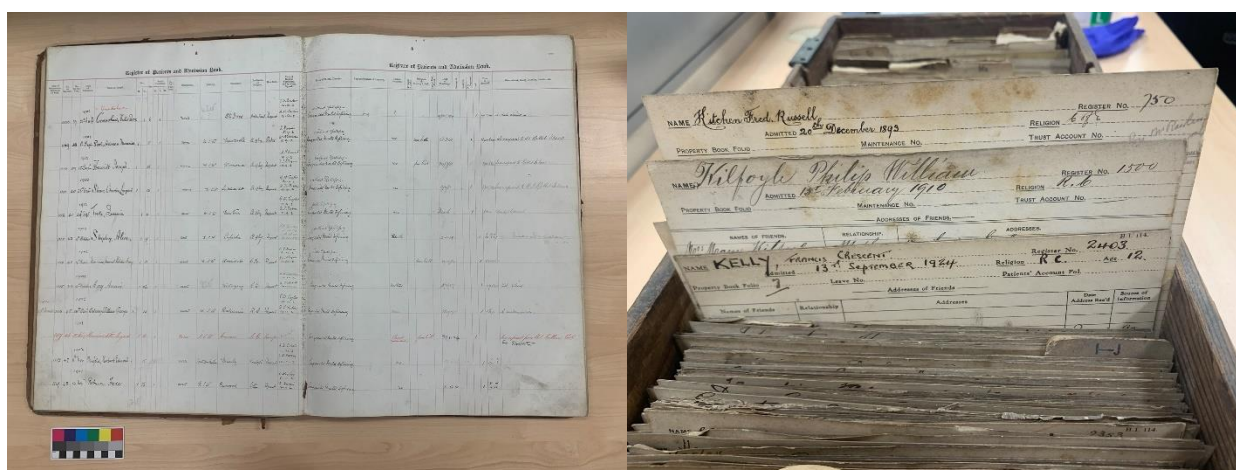
⁹ John Hunter Hospital, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hunter_Hospital#:~:text=Adolescent%20Mental%20Health-.Origin%20of%20Name.at%20the%20University%20of%20Sydney

¹⁰ Hunter New England Health Libraries strategic priorities, 2024-6, <https://www.hnehealthlibraries.com.au/About>

¹¹ HNE Health Libraries Collection Policy, <https://www.hnehealthlibraries.com.au/cdpolicy>

A few items held with the Collection are on long-term loan (including a 1633 2nd edition copy of William Langham's *Garden of Health*) and these were not included in this Assessment.

Two items currently held by the HNE Health Libraries are the Admissions Register ledger book and box of card files, relating to the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane mental health patients, from the 1890s to 1920s. These were noted and inspected during the site visit, however they have already been recognised by library staff as records belonging to the state of NSW, and plans are being made for their transfer to NSW State Records at Kingswood.



After the 1994-5 donation of the John Irvine Hunter collection, the Gardiner Library at the John Hunter Hospital acquired two display cabinets to house the collection, and these were placed on display with other items from the broader HNE LHD Health Libraries historical collection. In this location it was accessible to be viewed by the public, and it remained on display there until 2021, and the collection was packed up in early 2022 and transferred to the Calvary Mater Hospital Health Library.

At the Gardiner Library, the collection was viewed by a diverse range of community groups, including the general public, current and former John Hunter Hospital staff and patients, and tertiary medical students.

At the time of the Assessment site visits, there were no object files or documents relating to the individual items in the collection. When known, donor names were recorded in the Word document list of the collection created in 2022. There are also many items in the collection for which provenance has not been recorded, including how the item came to be in the collection.

Composition of the Collection

The main material types in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection are books, documents, printed ephemera, medical instruments and equipment, photographic prints, artwork, and memorabilia. The Collection relates to the broad historical theme of medical care and training, and to the following specific historical sub-themes:

- Life and work of Professor John Irvine Hunter, including his childhood, university, studies, teaching, travels, professional contribution and legacy
- Tertiary teaching and study of medicine at the University of Sydney in the 1910s-20s
- Newcastle Hospital for the Insane / Newcastle Mental Hospital
- Mental health treatment and developments in the Hunter New England region
- Medical treatment and patient care in the Hunter New England region
- Construction and development of the John Hunter Hospital (1991)

During the site visits for this Assessment, the items comprising the 'John Irvine Hunter collection', the 'historical collection' and the 'historical artefacts' were viewed, including (but not limited to) the following:

Office desks / storage boxes

- c.10 archive boxes containing historical books wrapped in bubble wrap
- c.5 archive boxes containing medical instruments and equipment wrapped in bubble wrap
- c.10 large photographic prints
- 3 microscopes in timber cases
- 3 straitjackets
- 1 baby in a coolamon carved wood sculpture
- 1 bronze plaque

Library displays

- 1 straitjacket displayed on a mannequin
- c.10 electro convulsive therapy (ECT) machines
- 1 basal metabolic rate machine

Professor John Irvine Hunter objects

A distinct sub-collection in the HNE Health Library Historical Collection is a group of over 40 books, 2 notebooks, 2 scrapbook-diaries, a biographical scrapbook and a bronze plaque, all of which relate to Professor John Irvine Hunter (1898-1924), an acclaimed anatomist and Challis Chair of Anatomy at the University of Sydney from 1923. This collection has excellent provenance, most of the notebooks and most of the books having been collected by Professor John Irvine Hunter, and a few books and the plaque collected and kept by his son, Irvine John Hunter. The biographical scrapbook was made by Professor John Irvine Hunter's wife, Hazel Hunter.

Born in Bendigo, Victoria, in 1898, John Irvine Hunter was educated at the Albury district school and then Fort Street High School in Sydney. He was a brilliant student and as an undergraduate medical student at the University of Sydney, Hunter won practically every prize and scholarship open to him, including the John Harris scholarship for anatomy and physiology and prizes for pathology, operative surgery, clinical surgery, and a surgical essay. After graduating with a Bachelor of Medicine (MB) and Master of Surgery (ChM) (1920) and MD (1924) from the University of Sydney, Hunter was almost immediately appointed Associate Professor in Anatomy.

Hunter worked as a prosector (dissecting cadavers and collecting prosection specimens for teaching) at the University of Sydney, a medical Tutor at Wesley College (where he was one of the foundation students in 1917), and a demonstrator in Anatomy at the University of Sydney (1919-20). In January 1921 he was appointed Associate Professor of anatomy and became the youngest professor in any first-class university in the world. He visited Europe and America to study the most recent methods in anatomical teaching and research, and in December 1921 -January 1922, he visited continental Europe on holiday, documenting his travels in a scrapbook/diary now held in the HNE Health Libraries collection. In 1922, Hunter was appointed Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney, succeeding J.T. Wilson.

Hunter devoted his research especially to the study of the nervous system, collaborating with N. D. Hoyle (also of Sydney University) in an investigation of 'spastic paralysis', now known as the dual innervation of muscle fibres. Hunter and Royle's study revealed that sympathetic nerves are present in voluntary muscles, and second, that their function is to stabilise the effect of voluntary muscle action and proving that certain cases of paralysis could be cured. Hunter produced numerous high quality research articles and he and Royle were invited to explain their discovery at a clinical congress to be held in New York in October 1924. They demonstrated the success of their new methods to an audience of 2500 surgeons from many parts of the world and delivered lectures at several universities and medical schools. In November, Hunter continued travelling to England to lecture in Cambridge and London. But while in Cambridge he became ill with typhoid fever, dying in London on 10 December 1924.

Although Hunter's active career was brief, he was considered among his peers as one of, if not, the leading anatomist in the British Empire. In Sydney, Hunter was best known as an engaging lecturer and a lovable colleague. On 23 December 1924, after Hunter's tragic death, the senate of the University of Sydney formally recorded a resolution about Hunter:-

In his short life, so greatly lived, he won universal affection by his beauty of character. He rose through his genius, as it were ideally, to represent whatever is best in university training, to become equal with the great anatomist by whom he was taught and whom he succeeded, to inspire the medical school even from his undergraduate days, and to embody the hope of the future for the whole university.¹²

Hunter was survived by his wife Hazel Hunter and their son Irvine John Hunter. John's collection of professional and personal books (many won as prizes at school) passed to the collection of Irvine John Hunter. He kept them in his possession, stored later in life at his home office at 11 Ada Avenue, Wahroonga, NSW.

¹² Senate of the University of Sydney, quoted in *Australian Encyclopaedia* 1925.

A small number of John Irvine Hunter's books seem to have been acquired from Irvine John Hunter by Newcastle collector John Hopetoun Algie (1901-1997). In April 1994, John Algie donated the collection to the Gardiner Library at the John Hunter Hospital, inspiring Irvine John Hunter to donate the remainder of his father's book collection to the Gardiner Library.¹³

Algie was a contemporary of Professor Hunter, born just a few years after Hunter, in Cobargo in regional NSW, and studying at Fort Street High School in Sydney. Algie graduated from the University of Sydney with a teaching degree and taught at schools all around NSW before settling in Newcastle, teaching there until his retirement in 1965. Algie became interested in local history and in the life and work of John Irvine Hunter, researching Hunter's life and work for three years. While researching, he met Betty Campbell, the granddaughter of Robert John Lukey, Secretary of Wesley College in 1922-32. Lukey had been involved in the project to establish the memorial to former Wesley student John Irvine Hunter. One of the bronze plaques commissioned by Lukey was passed down to Betty from her grandfather. In 1994, Betty (through John Algie) donated this plaque to the John Irvine Hunter collection, which John Algie was developing.

In his memorial to Betty Campbell, at her death in 1997, John H. Algie wrote:

When I began the years of research which resulted in 'THE JOHN IRVINE HUNTER COLLECTION' now on display in the Gardiner Library of the John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, my first discovery was Betty Campbell. Her grandfather, Robert John Lukey, was Secretary of Wesley College 1922-1932 and he was deeply involved in the project of establishing a Memorial to former student John Irvine Hunter. One of the bronze plaques (Head and Shoulders), the work of Rayner Hoff, was handed down to the Campbell Family.

This plaque, together with copies of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, for December 1924 and January 1925, containing 16 pages of Memorial Addresses were presented by Betty to the John Irvine Hunter Collection, in May 1994.

With the wonderful support of the manager of the Gardiner Library, Patricia Aguado and the Hospital authorities, the Collection is now beautifully displayed in two tall glass cylinders.

A suitably inscribed bronze plate recording Betty's contribution has been placed on the shelf with her gifts and will be a lasting Memorial to her in this city.

John H. Algie, 1997¹⁴

In June 1995, Patricia Aguado wrote to Irvine John Hunter, thanking him for the donation:

On behalf of the Gardiner Library Board, staff and users of the Gardiner Library Service, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your very generous donation of books from your father's collection.

It is a most significant gesture on your behalf, since I'm sure that you have family members who would also love to keep these precious mementos. Please be assured that they will be well looked after by library staff, and greatly treasured and cherished for generations to come...

¹³ *Interface: Newsletter of the Gardiner Library Service*, no 52, December 1997, 'Mr Algie and the John Irvine Hunter collection' file, HNELHD Health Libraries.

¹⁴ 'Memorial to Betty Campbell', 18 May 1997, John Algie, handwritten note in the 'Mr Algie and the John Irvine Hunter collection' file, HNELHD Health Libraries.

I must say that we are particularly thrilled to have received your father's notebook: 'Practical Zoology', from his first year at medical school in 1915, complete with his beautiful drawings and diagrams. Everyone who has

seen this notebook is impressed with the neatness and exactness of the notes, which gives considerable insight into the character of its owner...¹⁵

Patricia Aguado also wrote to thank John Algie, noting about the Hunter collection:

The books include prizes awarded to John Hunter as a schoolboy, such as 'The Swiss Family Robinson', and a selection of medical texts. The gem of the collection, though, is his notebook: 'Practical Zoology' dating from his first year in medical school, in 1915. The notebook is written entirely in his own hand, with coloured diagrams and drawings, and with not a single spelling mistake (that we can detect) or word crossed out!

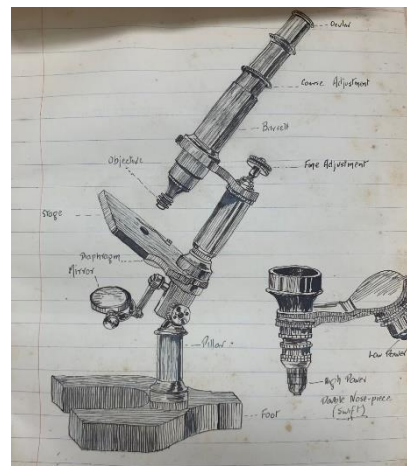
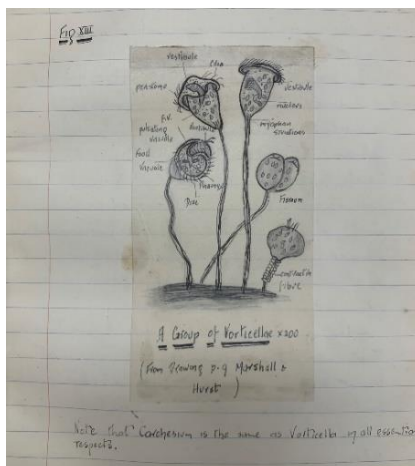
I would, once again, like to thank you, on behalf of the Gardiner Library Board for everything you have done in encouraging so many people to a renewed interest in John Hunter, and for being so instrumental in establishing the John Hunter Collection.

Most of all, I would like to thank you for the inspiration you have given to all of us, in sparking renewed pride in our historical background, and in ensuring that the memory of a unique individual, cut down in his prime, is not forgotten.¹⁶

Notebooks

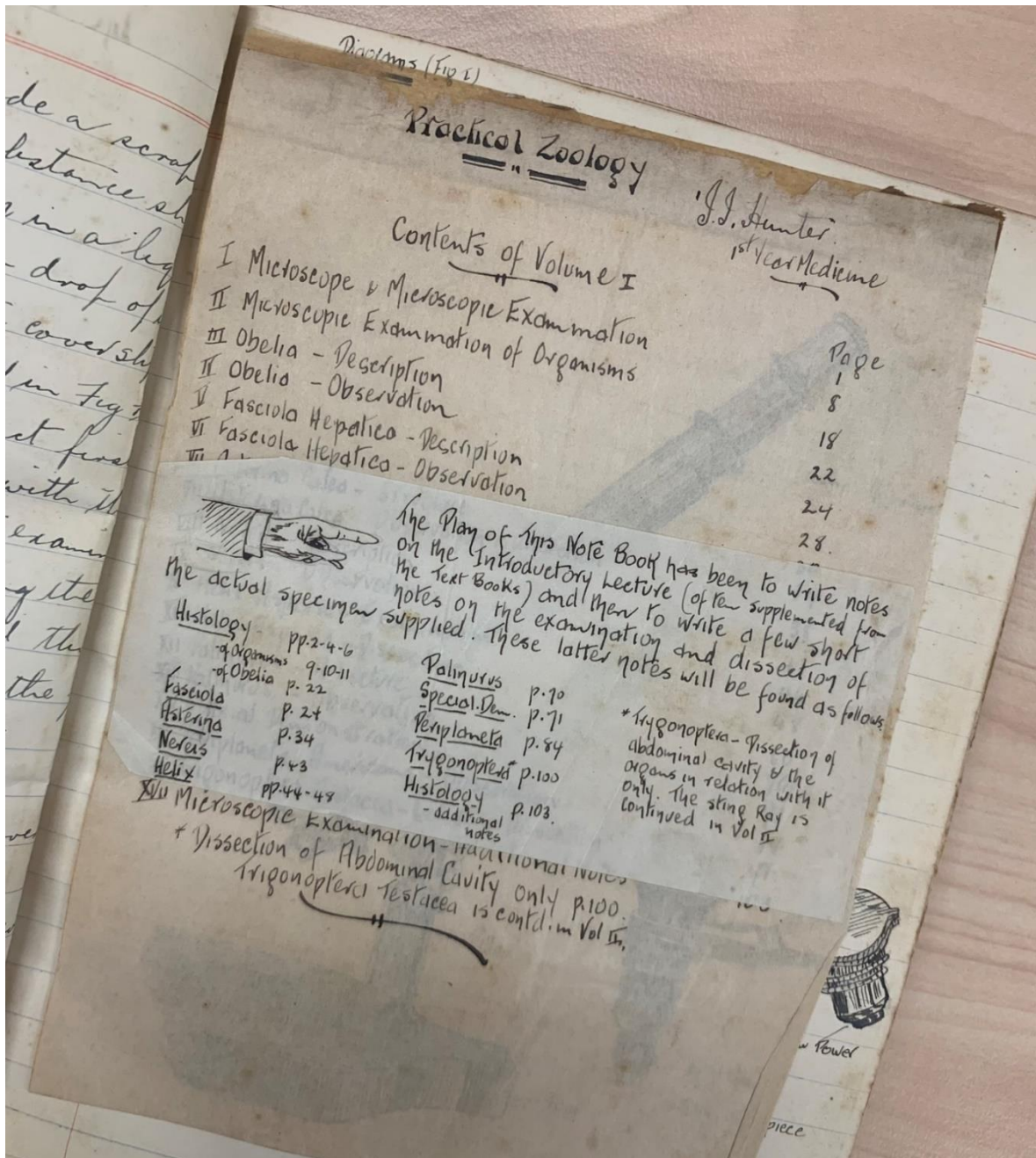
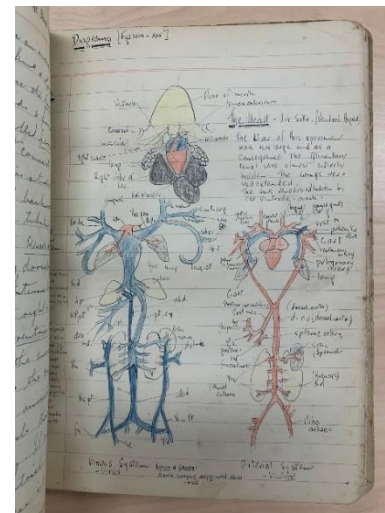
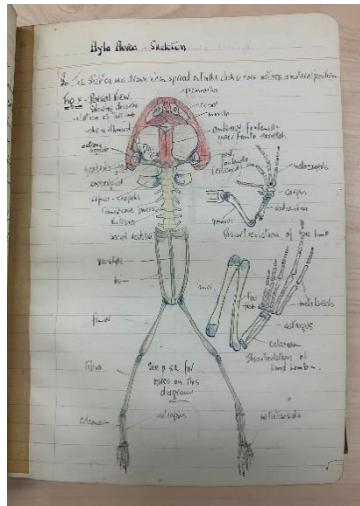
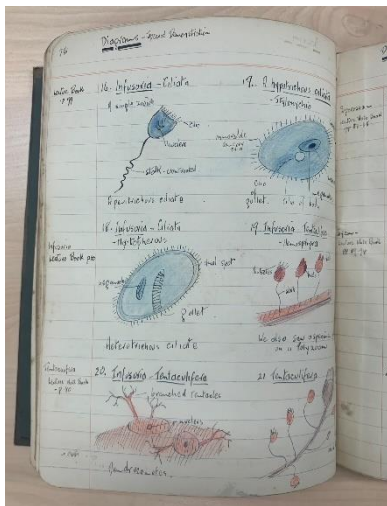
Perhaps the most important items in the John Irvine Hunter collection are two notebooks, made while he was studying medicine at the University of Sydney in 1915 (First Year) and 1920. This notebook is in perfect condition, and is unique, since it is entirely in John Hunter's own hand, complete with drawings and diagrams. As former Gardiner Library manager Patricia Aguado noted, 'not a single word has been crossed-out'.

The 'Practical Zoology' notebook (made by Hunter when studying First Year Medicine in 1915) is filled with his handwritten notes and detailed diagrams, relating to the microscope, examination of starch granules and the epidermis of an onion, microscope examination of organisms and obelia, histological investigation and practical zoology. The notebook also includes a typed examination paper for the First Year Medicine Zoology I – Practical Examination, from 5 December 1919.

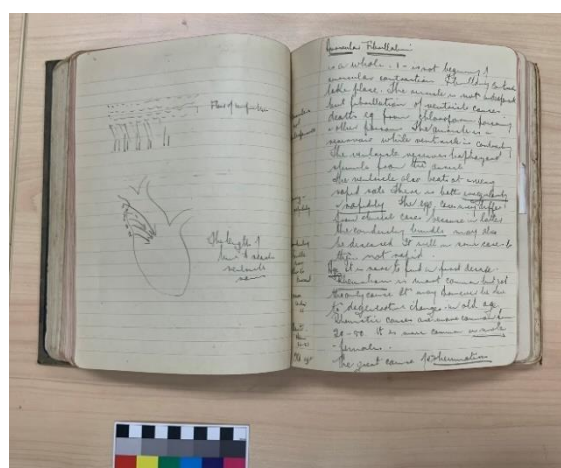
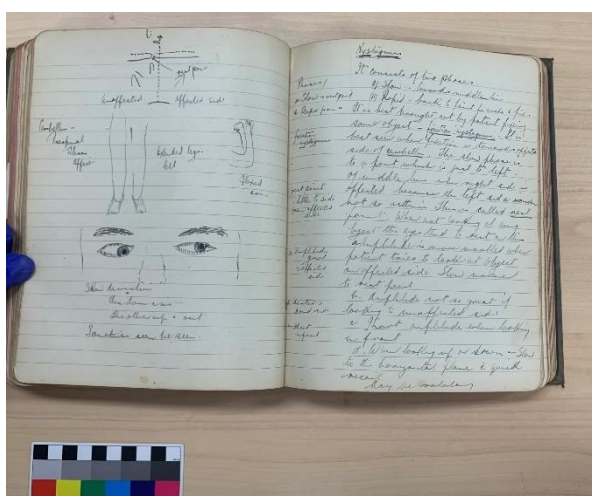
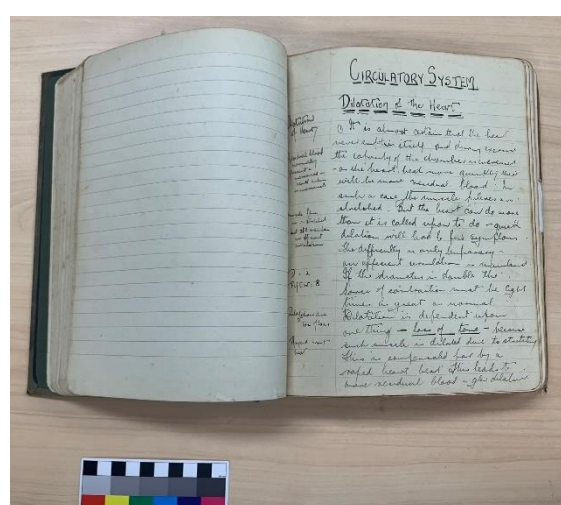
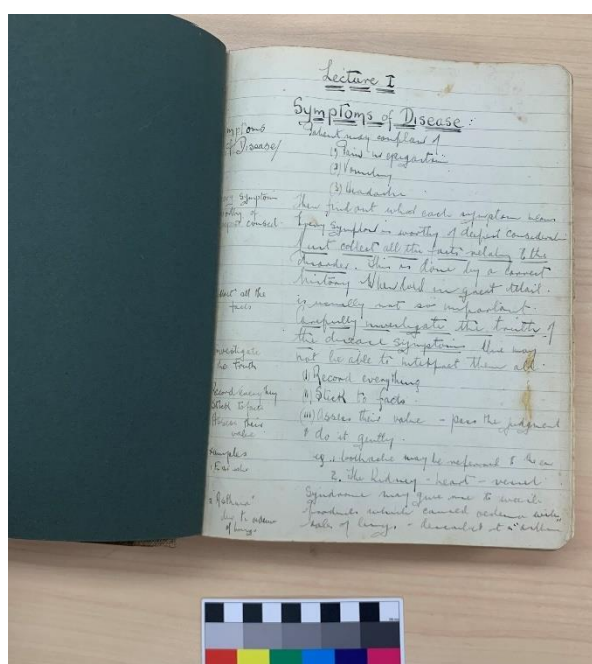


¹⁵ Patricia Aguado to Irvine John Hunter, 26 June 1995, 'Mr Algie and the John Irvine Hunter collection' file, HNELHD Health Libraries.

¹⁶ Patricia Aguado to John Algie, 26 June 1995, 'Mr Algie and the John Irvine Hunter collection' file, HNELHD Health Libraries.



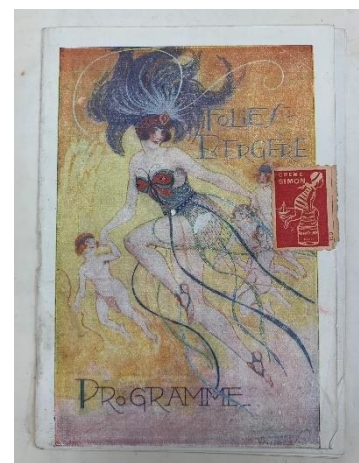
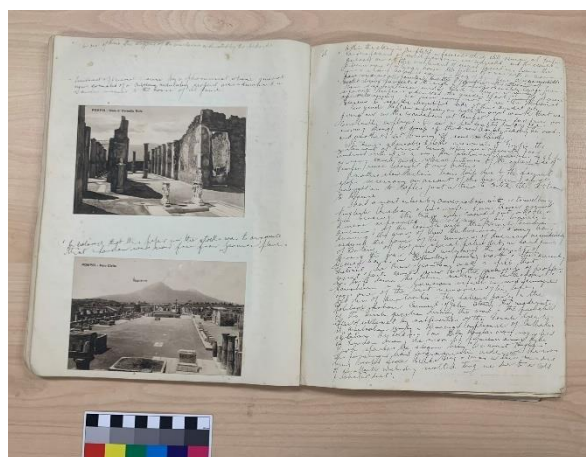
The other notebook, with 'MEDICINE / A.E. MILLS / J.I.H.' written on the spine, appears to be Hunter's handwritten notes made during the lectures of Professor Arthur Edward Mills (1865-1940), who, from 1910, was lecturer of the principles and practice of medicine at the University of Sydney.¹⁷ Among the subjects in this notebook are 'symptoms of disease', 'circulatory system', 'nervous diseases' and 'nutrition'. At first, Mills' lectures were not understood and the students complained to the dean, but Mills later became a popular lecturer, noted for his lively manner and the blackboard and chalk he took with him to the hospital wards. In 1915, the same year Hunter made this notebook of Mills' lectures, Mills joined the Australian Imperial Force as Major, serving overseas at No.1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, and at administrative headquarters, London, but he was recalled to the university in 1916. When Hunter was appointed as Professor, he became a colleague of Mills, who was appointed professor in 1920 and dean in 1920-25.



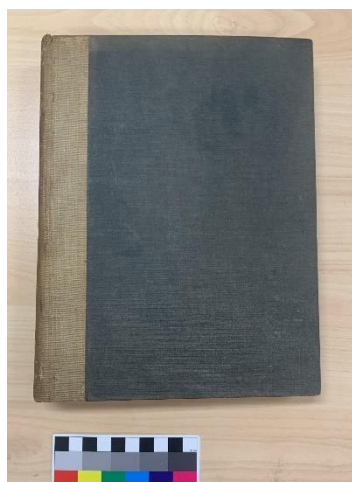
¹⁷ Professor Arthur Edward Mills, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mills-arthur-edward-7590>

Travel diary/scrapbooks

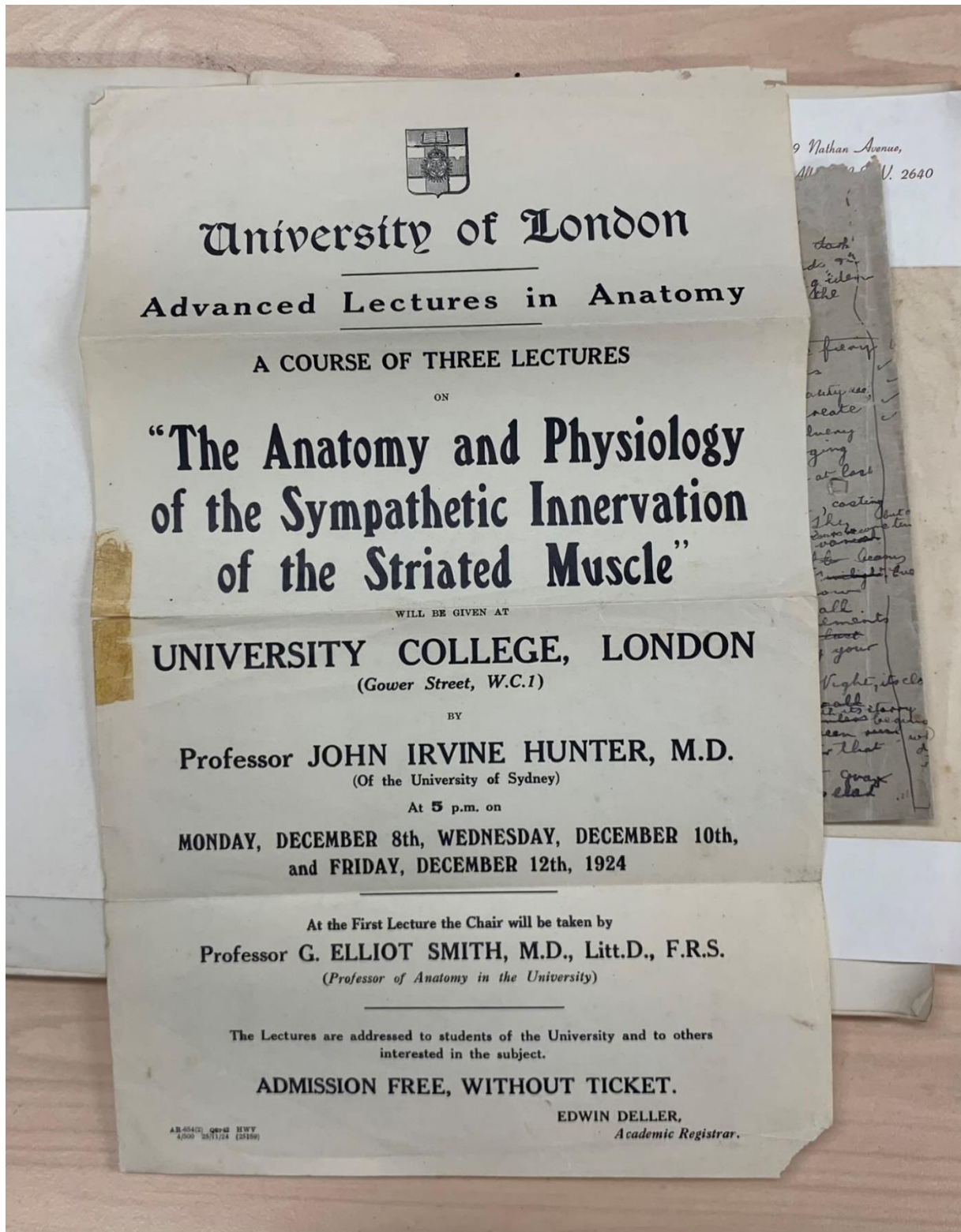
Two diary/scrapbooks in the Collection were created by Hunter during his travels in Britain and Europe, in 1921-2. One scrapbook, entitled 'Continental Trip / 'Xmas Vacation 1921 / Commenced 18th Dec '21', contains diary entries to his visit to Maintz, Germany, including a concertina colour map of the Rhine river, then handwritten entries and souvenir ephemera from Florence, Pompeii and Paris (including programs for the Opera and *Folies Bergère*).



The other scrapbook contains postcards of 'Gand' (Ghent, Belgium), which Hunter visited and attended the 17th meeting of the *Association des Anatomistes*, on 10-12 April 1922. Other postcards in this album are from Rome and Andermatt. Other unrelated papers have also been added to be contained within this scrapbook (probably by Irvine John Hunter or David Hunter), including the NSW Department of Public Instruction School Qualifying Certificate of John Irvine Hunter from 1912, and a 1981 photocopy of the Hunter family tree.



This diary/scrapbook also contains an important loose flyer advertising a course of three lectures to be given by Hunter on 'The Anatomy and Physiology of the Sympathetic Innervation of the Striated Muscle', at University College in London, on 8, 10 and 12 December 1924. This flyer is especially poignant, as Hunter never delivered these lectures - he had already fallen ill and died on 10 December.



Scrapbook

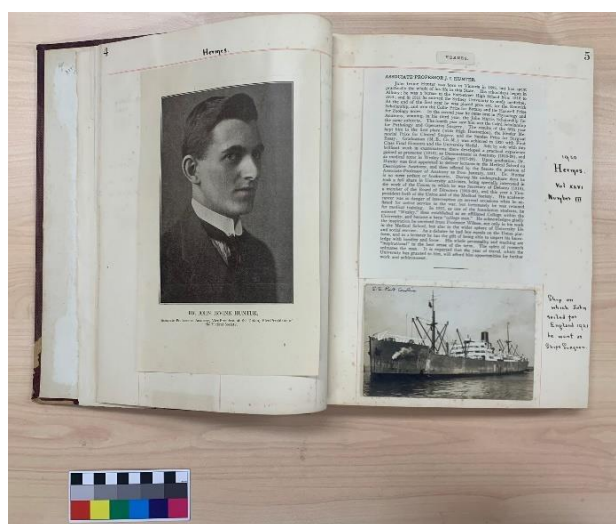
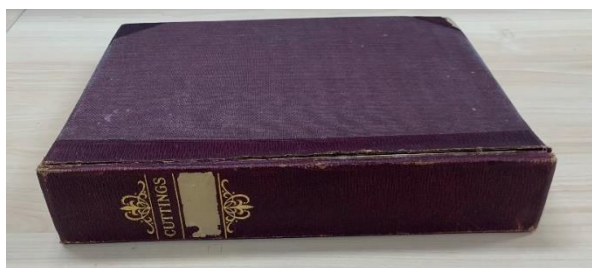
Another important item in the collection is the scrapbook of the life and achievements of John Hunter, 1914-1933, made by his wife Hazel Hunter. This contains numerous newspaper cuttings, articles and documents relating to John Irvine, with Hazel's handwritten annotations in the margins, and including two newspaper portraits of Hazel. This scrapbook is a unique chronicle of Hunter's life, embodying great personal sentiment, having been made by his wife Hazel. It is uncertain

whether Hazel created this scrapbook gradually throughout her husband's life, or whether she compiled it after his death, arranging the clippings and papers chronologically.

The newspaper cuttings and ephemera Hazel collected include clippings from *Hermes* (1920), *The Sydney Morning Herald* (1921-3), *Sydney University Medical Journal* (1922), *Daily Telegraph* (1921), *Evening News* (1922), a 1922 letter from Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, introducing John Hunter to Dr Carl Huber at the University of Michigan (where Hunter wished to learn methods of teaching anatomy), and a flyer on his 1923 lecture on 'The Evolution of the Brain' (1923) and 'The Antiquity of Man' (1924). Other clippings outline Hunter's new treatment for paralysis, including an article about his work in the *New York Times* (May 1924).

One clipping, from the *Sydney University Medical Journal* (1922) described the impact of the departure of Professor Hunter for England, noting that 'He radiated sympathy as well as genius, and it is on this account... that his popularity with his students was so immense'.

Page 71 of the scrapbook marks the tragic turning point in Hunter's story, with clippings announcing his death, one from the *Evening News* [London] of 11 December 1924 describing Hunter as 'One of the most brilliant young men Sydney has ever produced'. An ex-student of Fort Street High School, then living in London, wrote 'His knowledge of his own subject, his appreciation of international politics, his profound reading, his power of analysis and deduction, his coordination of facts, his universal interests and outstanding modesty, have given the Professor Anatomy at Sydney University the great respect and admiration of everybody who has met him'. The clippings that follow express numerous obituaries from both Australian and UK newspapers, messages of condolences reflecting his universal popularity, and the unveiling of the memorial plaque at Wesley College in April 1927.



Memorial plaque by Rayner Hoff

A framed plaster and bronze memorial plaque in the Collection, made with John Irvine Hunter's image, is significant by its association with Hunter, as well as its creator, Rayner Hoff (1894-1937). Born on the Isle of Man, Hoff was one of the leading figures in Australian art education and is recognised today as Australia's leading art deco sculptor.



Hoff studied at the Nottingham Art School, and then enlisted to serve with the British Army during World War I. While he was first assigned to trenches in France, his drawing skills were quickly recognised, and he was then employed for the rest of the war in drawing battlefield maps from aerial photographs. After the war, he continued his studies at the Royal Academy of Art, where he won the prestigious Prix de Rome. In 1923 Hoff migrated to Australia to take a teaching position at the East Sydney Technical College, where he eventually became head of the art department and later principal. Many of Hoff's students became some of the most significant sculptors of the interwar period. He and his students were concerned with post-war reconstruction ideals and modernising classical traditions using art deco style.

Hoff produced numerous small sculptures and won the Wynne Prize in 1927. But his most famous works are his sculptures on important art-deco buildings such as the City Mutual Life Assurance building in Sydney, and on war memorials in Dubbo and Adelaide as well as the Anzac Memorial in Sydney. He also produced numerous high-profile commissioned works, including the lion that became the insignia of the General Motors Holden Company (1926-7), the medal for the NSW Society of Artists (1924) and the John Sulman medal for the Institute of Architects of NSW (1931-2). While working on Canberra's King George V memorial in 1937, he died unexpectedly, aged just 42.¹⁸

In October 1925, a committee of prominent individuals from the University of Sydney (including Vice Chancellor Professor MacCallum and Hunter's former professor, A.E. Mills) commissioned Rayner Hoff to produce several bronze memorial plaques in Hunter's honour. Hoff produced two large bronze memorial plaques with text inscriptions, and these were installed at Fort Street High School (where Hunter had attended school) and in the entrance hall of Wesley College at the University of Sydney, where Hunter had lived as a medical student (see Comparative Collections section below for details of these plaques).

Hoff also produced smaller plaques, made in plaster and finished in bronze on the front (like that in the HNE Collection), which were available for purchase from the University Union, Medical School and the British Medical Association rooms, with the funds going towards the Hunter Memorial Fund.¹⁹ The example in the Collection appears to have kept by Hunter's wife Hazel and passed to their son Irvine John Hunter. The appeal to raise money for the Fund was intended to support a range of memorial initiatives, including commissioning a portrait painting (which now hangs in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney), to establish a Hunter Memorial Lecture, to establish a Hunter Library and Hunter Memorial Scholarship and Research Institute,²⁰ The committee recognised that Hunter was 'a scientist of outstanding brilliance and achievement', and saw the opportunity to establish a research institute in his name, like those established for other prestigious scientists – the Lister Institute in London and Pasteur Institute in Paris.²¹ The Committee felt that 'his genius brought high honour to Australia'.²² Fundraising continued until at least September 1927, and some of the committee's objectives were realised with the funds raised.²³

Aside from the two large bronze memorials identified above, no other examples of the framed plaster and bronze memorial to John Irvine Hunter were located during the research undertaken for this Assessment.

Books owned by John Irvine Hunter

44 books in the John Irvine Hunter Collection were owned by John Irvine Hunter. Many of these are common medical and scientific texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and many copies of them are held in public libraries around Australia and Internationally. These copies are, however, unique for their association with Hunter – many are marked with his name on the upper right-

¹⁸ Rayner Hoff, <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/artists/hoff-rayner/>

¹⁹ HUNTER MEMORIAL PLAQUE. (1926, November 5). *The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842 - 1954)*, p. 15. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16314743>

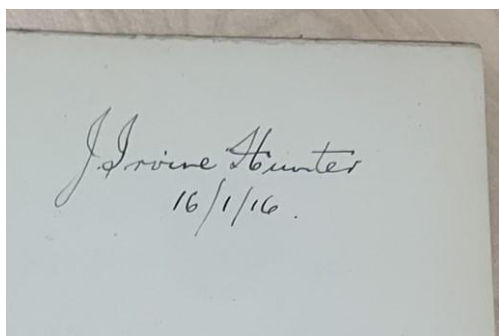
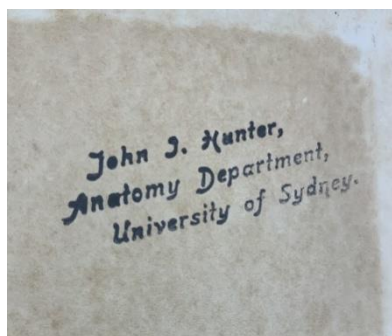
²⁰ HUNTER MEMORIAL (1925, October 9). *The Labor Daily (Sydney, NSW: 1924 - 1938)*, p. 7. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article238115974>

²¹ THE UNIVERSITY (1925, October 9). *The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW: 1883 - 1930)*, p. 4. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245051472>

²² Current Topics (1925, October 14). *Sydney Mail (NSW: 1912 - 1938)*, p. 6. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160083636>

²³ FOR PORTRAIT (1927, September 17). *Evening News (Sydney, NSW: 1869 - 1931)*, p. 8. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article121682345>

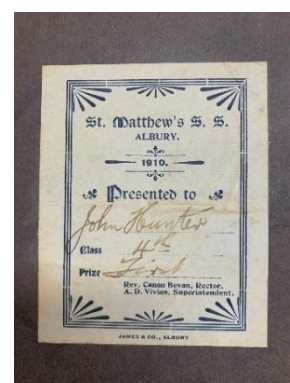
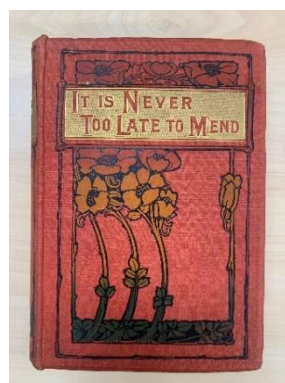
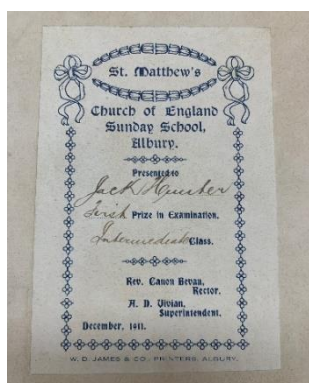
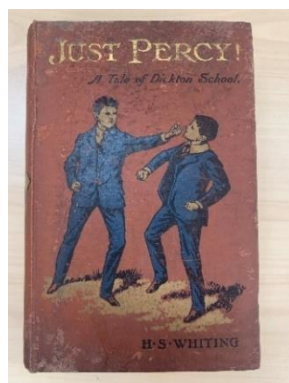
hand corner of the inside cover page, either as a handwritten signature, or with his stamp with the text 'John I. Hunter / Anatomy Department / University of Sydney', and others are labelled with a small square gummed label on the spine with his initials 'JIH'. Some of the books also bear the signatures of former owners, and these are noted in the descriptions below. Some of these books do not carry any signature, stamp or label, but, in the absence of any list of items donated to the Collection by Irvine John Hunter, these books are now assumed to have been owned by JIH according to the subject and date of publication, which are similar to those marked with his name.



- School prize books

6 books were prizes awarded to John 'Jack' Irvine Hunter as a Sunday school student, at Albury Public School, illustrating how his application and brilliance as a student was evident early in life.

Sappers and Miners – presented for the quarterly examinations in fifth class at Albury Public School, 1910; *Loyal to Napoleon*, presented for 1st prize, general proficiency in Fourth Class, Albury Public School, 1909, *Swiss Family Robinson*, for 3rd prize for English in Third Class, *It's Never Too Late to Mend* presented for 4th class; *Just Percy*, presented to 'Jack' Hunter for 1st prize in examination. St Matthew's Church of England Sunday School. 1911; *A Boy of the First Empire*, presented to Presented to J Hunter. First prize. General Proficiency, Albury, 1910.





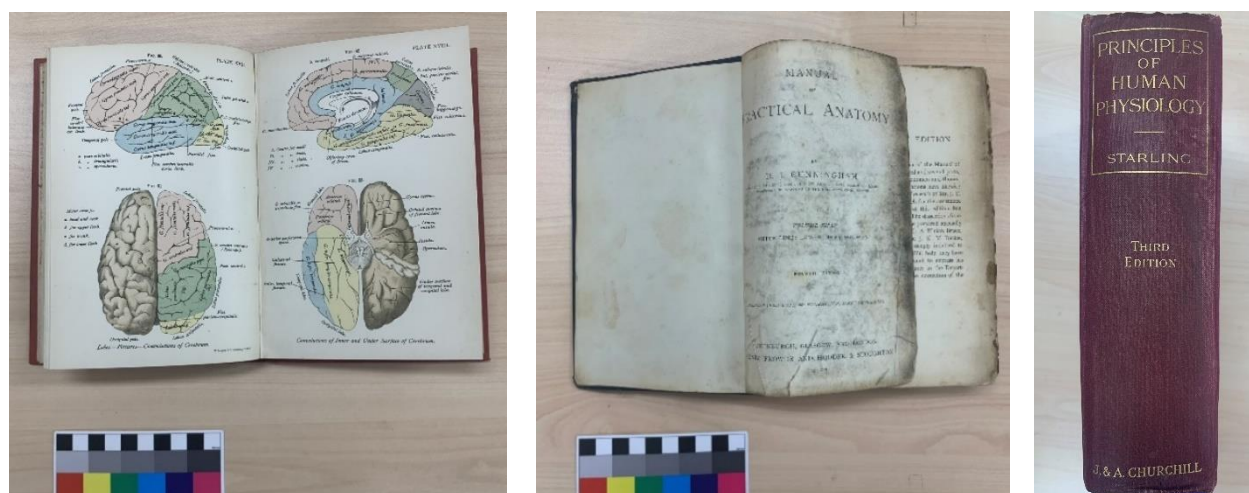
- Anatomy & physiology books

Anatomy of the Brain and Spinal Cord / Whitaker, 1921 (5th ed.) - relatively rare in Australia, with just two copies of this edition held in other public collections in Australia. There is only one copy of the 4th edition (1911), but numerous copies of this book are held in UK libraries, such as the British Library.

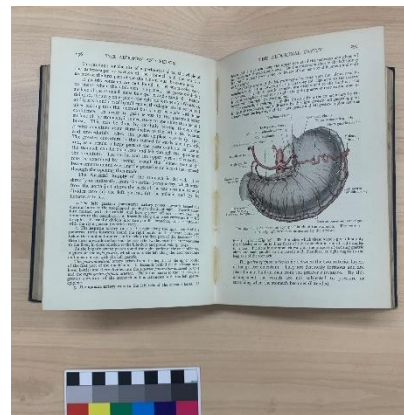
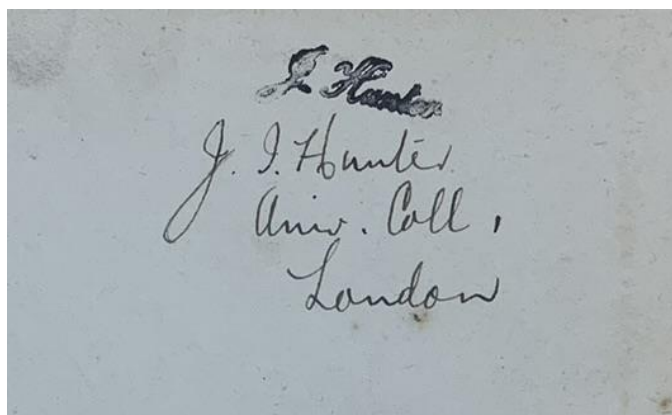
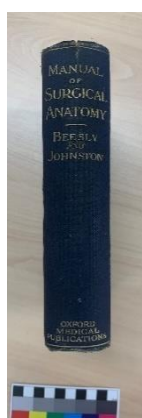
Manual of Practical Anatomy / Cunningham, 1907, vol I (4th ed.) – part of a manual published in three volumes, and a popular text around the world, first published in 1896, which provides students and practitioners with a comprehensive guide to human anatomy and dissection. This copy has suffered black mould growth in the past but is now stable.

Principles of human physiology / Starling, 1920 – contains JIH's signature

Anatomical terminology with special reference to the [BNA] / Barker, 1907 – does not contain JIH stamp or signature but assumed to have been his book.

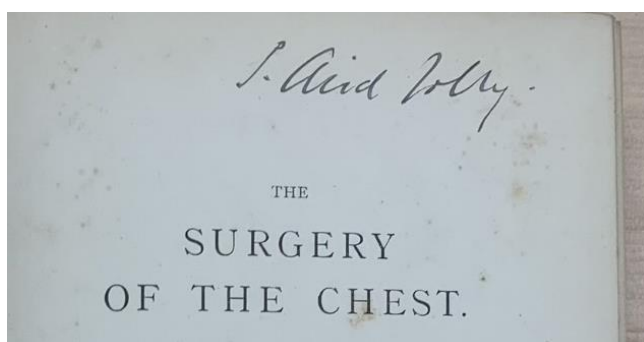
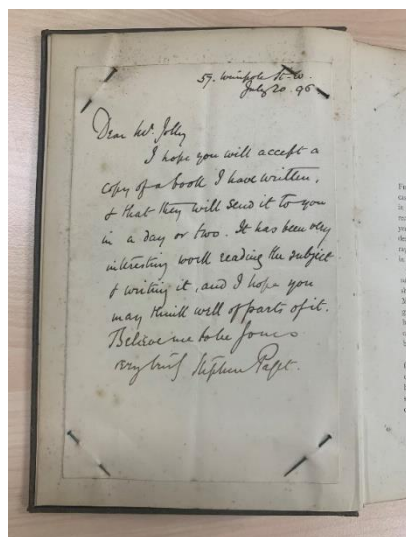
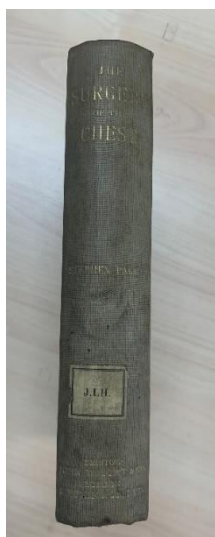


Manual of surgical anatomy / Beesly & Johnston, 1918 (2nd ed.) – this book appears to have been acquired by JIH while studying medicine at University College, London, since he wrote inside the cover 'J.I. Hunter / Univ. Coll. / London'.

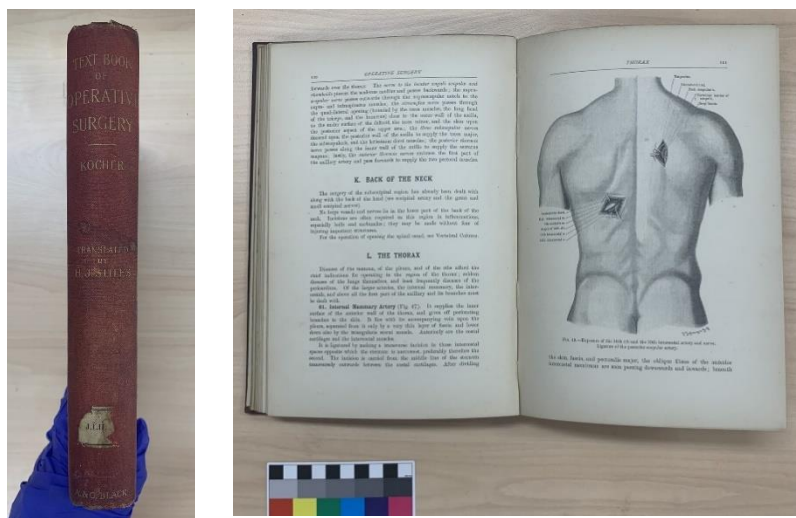


- Surgery books

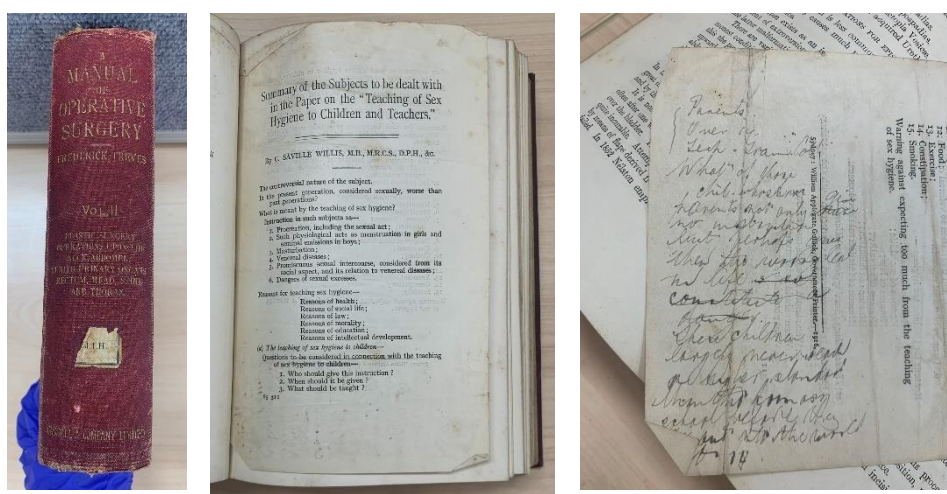
The Surgery of the Chest / Paget, 1896 – this book has the JIH stamp, and the handwritten name 'S. Aird Jolly', with a handwritten letter pinned into the inside front cover. The letter, written by the book's author Stephen Paget, is addressed to 'Mr Jolly', at 57 Wimpole Street, W. London, July 1896, stating how he had requested a copy of this book to be sent to Aird Jolly.



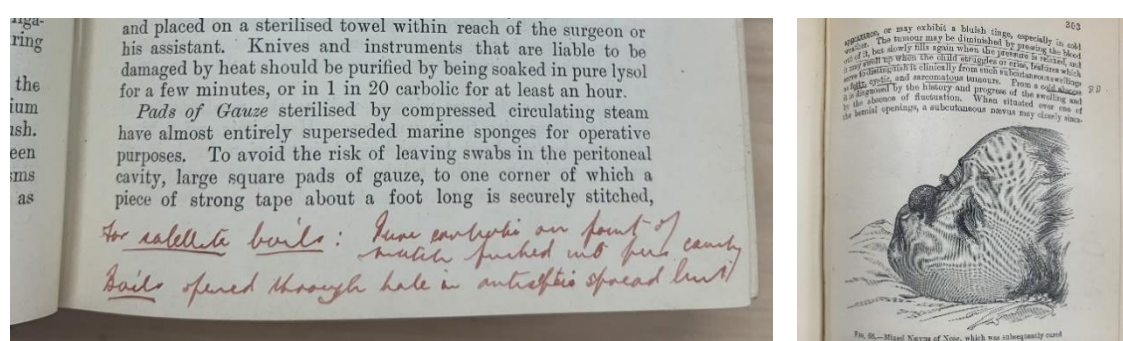
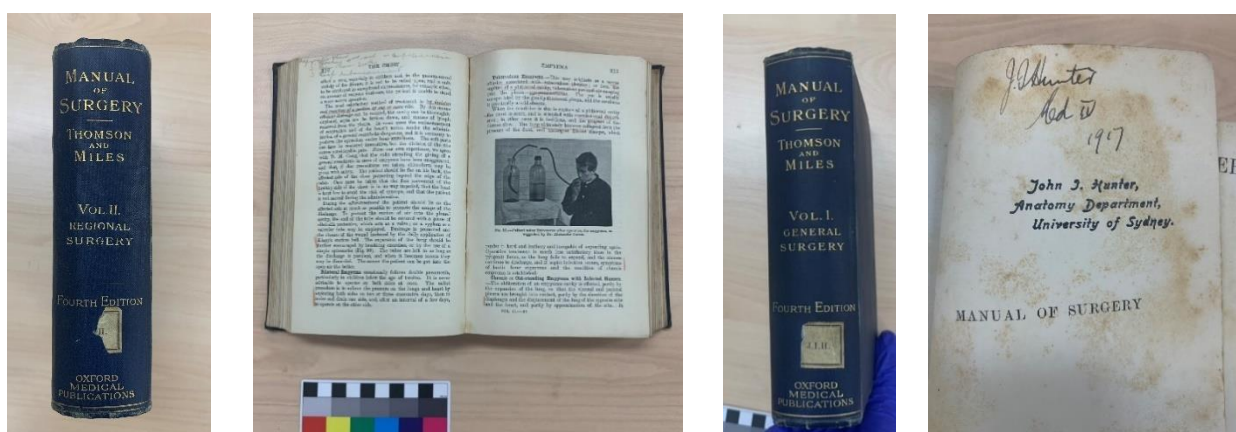
Textbook of operative surgery / Kocher, 1895 – contains the JIH stamp and spine label.



A manual of operative surgery / Frederick Treeves 1894 – this volume contains a loose-leaf flyer that has been slotted into the book, perhaps as a book mark. The flyer is entitled 'Summary of the Subjects to be dealt with in the Paper on the 'Teaching of Sex Hygiene to Children and Teachers'', with handwritten notes on the reverse, probably in the hand of JIH.

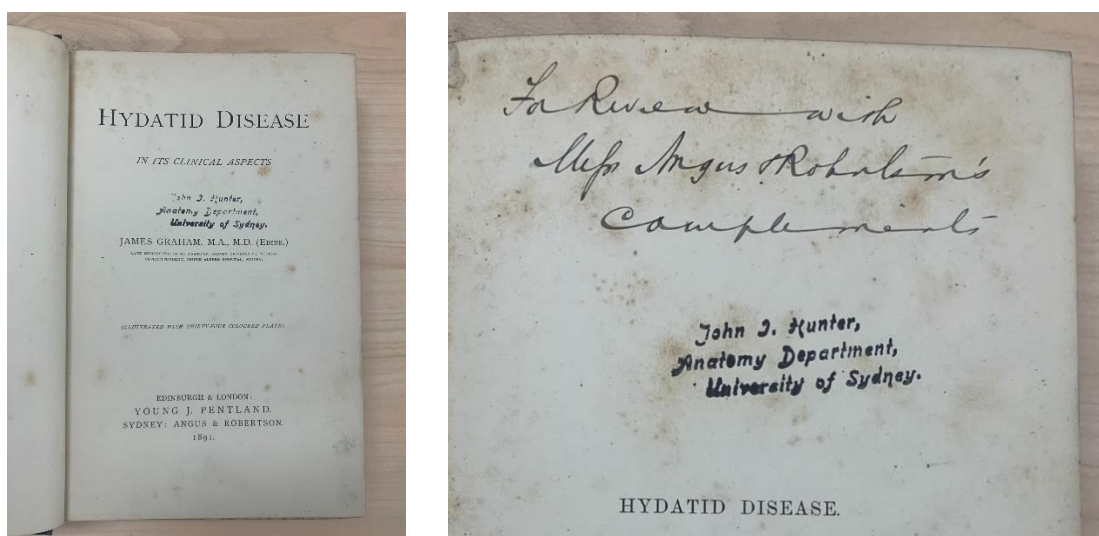


Manual of Surgery / Thomson and Miles, 1913, Vol. 1 General Surgery, Vol 2 Regional surgery – volume 1 has John Irvine Hunter's signature and 'Med IV / 1917', indicating that he acquired this book as a fourth-year medical student, probably for use as a textbook for his studies. Some of the pages in this book contain text underlined in ink by JIH, and other pages also have handwritten notes in his hand.

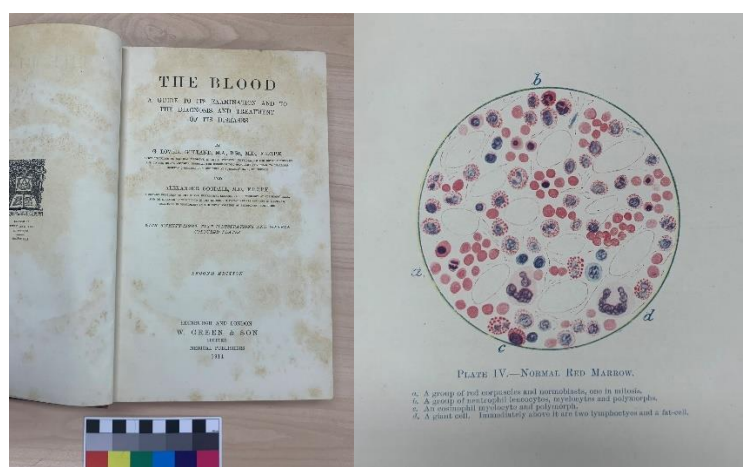


- Books on disease

A copy of *Hydatid Disease in its Clinical Aspects* / Graham, 1891, bears the JIH stamp and is also inscribed on the same page with the handwritten note 'For Review with / Mssrs Angus & Robertson's / Complements'. This appears to have been a review copy sent to John Irvine Hunter by booksellers Angus & Robertson. The publication date of the book of 1891 suggests that this book was inscribed as a review copy well before JIH obtained it, which would have been around 1920.



The Blood: A guide to its examination and to the diagnosis and treatment of its diseases / Gulland and Goodall, 1914 (2nd ed.) – this book contains the JIH stamp.



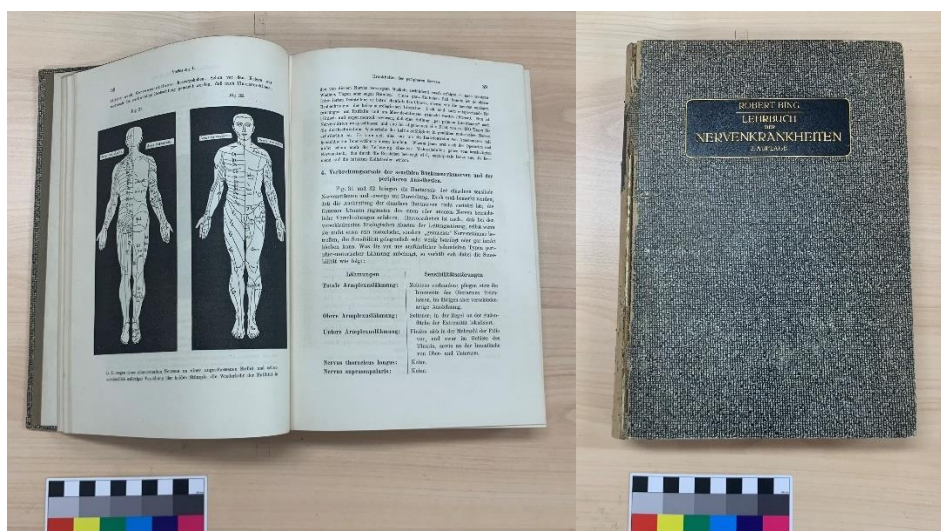
Manual of Bacteriology / Muir and Ritchie, 1913 – signed 'J.I. Hunter / Wesley College / 1918', this book appears to have been acquired by JIH in his fifth year of studying medicine at the University of Sydney, while living at Wesley College.



Clinical lectures and essays on Rickets, Tuberculosis and abdominal tumors / Sir William Jenner, 1895

The diagnosis of nervous diseases / Purves Stewart, 1920 – this volume has been inscribed by JIH with his name on the first page.

Lehrbuch der Nervenkrankheiten [Textbook of Nervous Diseases] / Bing, 1921



- Medical science books

German clinical lectures - Medicine, surgery, obstetrics / 1876 – with the JIH stamp and the stamp of the 'Sydney University Medical Society', from which JIH appears to have acquired the book. Other titles in this group owned by JIH include, *A physical interpretation of shock, exhaustion and restoration / George W Cirile, 1921*; *Practical medicine and medical diagnosis / Byron Bramwell, 1887*.

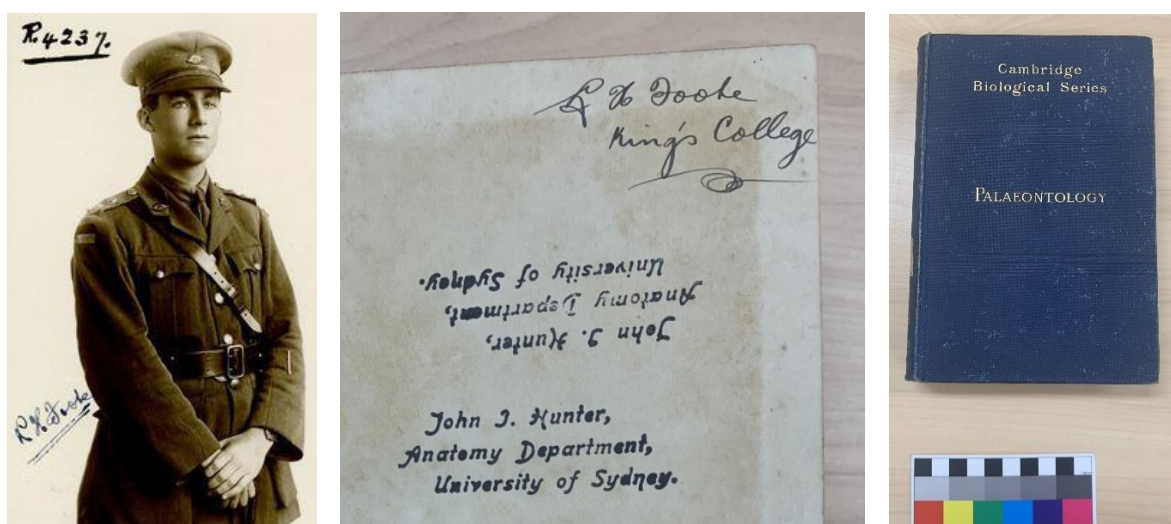
- Other sciences

Palaeontology – Invertebrate / Woods, Cambridge Biological Series, 1909 - bears the JIH stamp, and the signature of the book's former owner 'L. H. Foote / King's College'. Research indicates that this was Leonard Hardwick Foote (1894-1947), from Ipswich, Queensland, who studied Engineering in 1913 and 1914 at the University of Queensland and was a fellow of King's College. In 1915, Foote enlisted with the First AIF in World War I.

Foote was initially assigned to the 3rd Field Ambulance, 3rd Brigade, spending six months at Gallipoli, where he was involved in caring for wounded troops from the August attacks at Lone Pine, the Nek, Hill 60 and Sari Bair. After the evacuation, Foote spent three months in Egypt, remaining with the 3rd Field Ambulance Tent division when it was sent to France. On the Western Front he helped to treat the sick & wounded in the Dressing Stations, Casualty Clearing Stations and the General Hospitals. After completing officer training at Oxford in 1917, Foote was posted as a Second Lieutenant to the 9th Battalion in France, where he sustained a severe chest wound on 1 October while working with a communication cable laying party which suffered heavy casualties when hit by German shells, prior to the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge. After evacuation to England for convalescence, he returned to Australia in January 1918 on the *Euripides*.²⁴

²⁴ Leonard Hardwick Foote (1894 – 1947), <https://wwma.org.au/explore/people/133456>; https://digitize-wwma.s3.amazonaws.com//documents/931/file/King_s_College_article_Len_Foote.pdf

Foote then resumed his university studies, transferring to study Medicine at the University of Sydney and to live resided at Wesley College, where he would have met fellow medical student and Wesley College resident, John Irvine Hunter. On graduation, Foote returned to Brisbane, and worked as resident medical officer, at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and then at the Brisbane Hospital. He worked in general practice, later to specialise in anaesthetics and becoming anaesthetist at the Brisbane Military Hospital and the Mater Public Hospital. Foote served again in World War II, this time with the Australian Medical Corps, based in Brisbane. He held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and became Assistant Director of Medical Services, Foot died from a heart attack in 1947, aged 52. Leonard Foote and John Irvine Hunter were contemporaries and fellow medical professionals, but it is not known why or when Hunter obtained this book which had previously been owned by Foote. It is possible that they once met or were even friends, and that this was a gift from Foote to Hunter, or that Hunter simply obtained it second hand from a book seller.



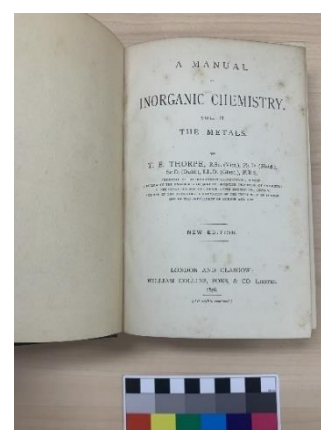
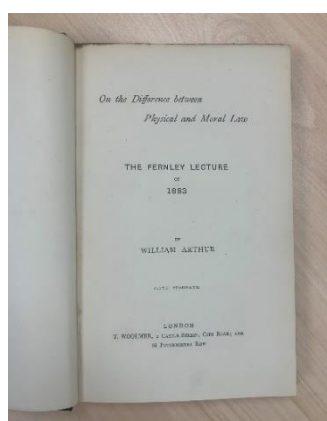
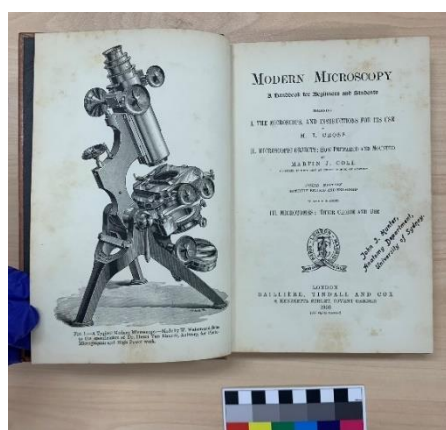
Above left Leonard Hardwick Foote, 1st AIF, 1915. Source: Virtual War Memorial.

A Manual of Inorganic Chemistry / Vol II The Metals, 1896 – this book has no JIH label or mark, but is assumed to have been owned by JIH. This appears to have been a standard text on the subject in the late nineteenth century, and several copies of this edition, and earlier editions, are held in Australian libraries.

On the Difference Between Physical and Moral Law / Arthur, 1883 – this book is signed on the inside right-hand page by JIH, with the date 16/1/16. In January 1916, when he acquired this book, Hunter was studying medicine at the University of Sydney.

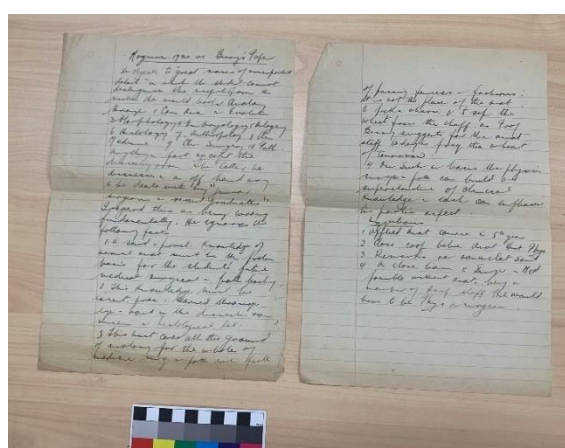
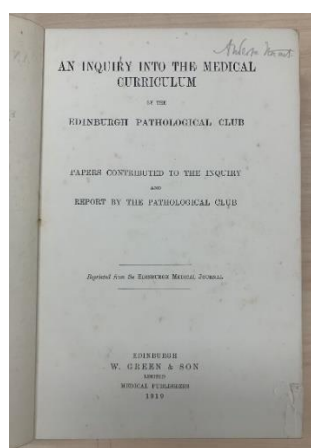
Organic chemistry / Perkin and Kipping, 1911, part 1 – bears JIH stamp and label on spine.

Modern microscopy / Cross & Cole, 1903 - bears JIH stamp and label on spine.



- University books

An inquiry into the medical curriculum by the Edinburgh Pathological Club / 1919 – this book contains the JIH stamp, but also the name of the previous author (which cannot be deciphered), handwritten on the title page. The book also contains two loose pages of handwritten notes reviewing the book. This may have been written by JIH or the previous owner.



- History books

JIH owned a copy of *Writings and speeches* / Lord Macaulay (1860). This book is signed inside 'J.I. Hunter', and also carries a book plate for Edwin Thomas Clapham. This may be the Australian man of that name who was born in 1843 in Victoria and died in 1917 in Balmain, NSW,²⁵ or perhaps a man of the same name in the UK.

The History of the Sydney Hospital from 1811 to 1911 / Watson, 1911 – this book does not have any stamp or signature of JIH, but it does have the signature of 'J. Skillicorn'. This may have belonged to Jack Skillicorn, a resident of Newcastle, who was an amateur wrestling champion, who was employed

²⁵ Edwin Thomas Clapham, <https://mail.austcemindex.com/other-sources?id=7592457>; <https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/120792719/person/112056940082/facts> (accessed 13 May 2025).

in the Trades Hall and was a speaker and writer on behalf of pacifism.²⁶ In 1909 Sydney Hospital became the second general teaching hospital associated with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney. Given this association, and the date of publication, it is possible that this book belonged (second-hand) to John Irvine Hunter and was donated as part of the JIH collection.



Hunter's Works Volumes i, ii, iii, iv / James F Palmer (ed) 1837 - annotated with a handwritten note 'To J.I. Hunter from [??] Maguire, 24/3/1923. Each volume contains the book plate of Augustus Burke Shepherd (1839 -1885), an English physician, who was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and who later became the dean of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London.²⁷ This set of books was already antiquarian when JIH acquired them in 1923. Further research is needed to identify the man named Maguire who gifted them to Hunter. Another book about William Hunter is also held in the collection; *William Hunter: Anatomist, Physician, Obstetrician (1718 -1783)* / R. Hingston Fox – signed by John Irvine Hunter.



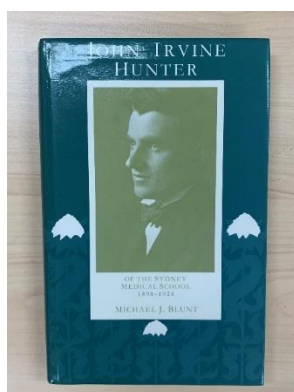
John Irvine Hunter biographies – owned by Irvine John Hunter

The Collection includes a copy of Michael J. Blunt, *John Irvine Hunter* (1985), signed on the inside cover by Dorothy E. Fuller (née Hunter) – John Irvine's only sister. On her death, the book was passed to Irvine John Hunter, who gifted it John Algie for his dedication to researching Professor John Irvine Hunter's life. John Algie then donated it to the Gardiner Library in 1995.²⁸

²⁶ JACK SKILLICORN'S DEATH. (1939, November 28). *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW: 1842 - 1954), p. 16. Retrieved May 2, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17641521>

²⁷ Augustus Burke Shepherd, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_Burke_Shepherd

²⁸ Typed letter from John Algie to Ms Aguado, Gardiner Library, 1995, 'Mr Algie and the John Irvine Hunter collection' file, HNELHD Health Libraries.



A range of other titles about JIH include *John Irvine Hunter Memorial Lecture: The Piltdown hoax and human evolution; New light on the impact of Sir Arthur Keith, Ian Langham, Raymond Dart and Australopithecus* / University of Sydney, 1992; 'In Memoriam John Irvine Hunter MD', reprinted from the *Journal of Anatomy*, v LIX, Part III, April 1925; 'John Irvine Hunter Memorial Ceremony'. reprinted from *Medical Journal of Australia*, Dec 20, 1924 and Jan 10, 1925; *Johnny Hunter: A genius of simplicity and charm* / John Brett, 1993; and *John Irvine Hunter of the Sydney Medical School 1894 – 1924* / Michael J Blunt.

Framed pictures of the University of Sydney

Two framed pictures in the Collection include a framed 1924 etching of the University of Sydney Medical school building signed by 'E. Warner' - Alfred Edward Warner (1879-1968), and a colour photograph of the Great Hall of University of Sydney. Warner was a London-born printmaker, who ran his own studio in London before emigrating to Australia in 1911.²⁹ After working with the Star newspaper in New Zealand, he returned to Australia in 1919, he worked as a commercial artist. Around 1923 he began etching and exhibiting his work and gaining a reputation for his work. He produced numerous works in the 1930s, including his Australia at Work series, and a series of colour linocuts, cards and screenprints. The date of the Warner etching suggests that it may have been owned by John Irvine Hunter, whereas the colour photograph appears to be from the mid twentieth century and collected by Irvine John Hunter.



²⁹ Edward Warner, Josef Lebovic Gallery, collector's list No. 137, 2009, https://www.joseflebovicgallery.com/images/upload/CL_137_Warner_PARAS.pdf

Documents

Documentation relating to John Algie's donations to the Gardiner Library indicate that he donated a program from the Fort Street High School Old Boys' Union Dinner on 21 June 1921 – which he had attended, and at which he had met Professor John Irvine Hunter. This was not sighted during the site visit for the Assessment, but it is an important document that should be located and stored with the JIH collection.

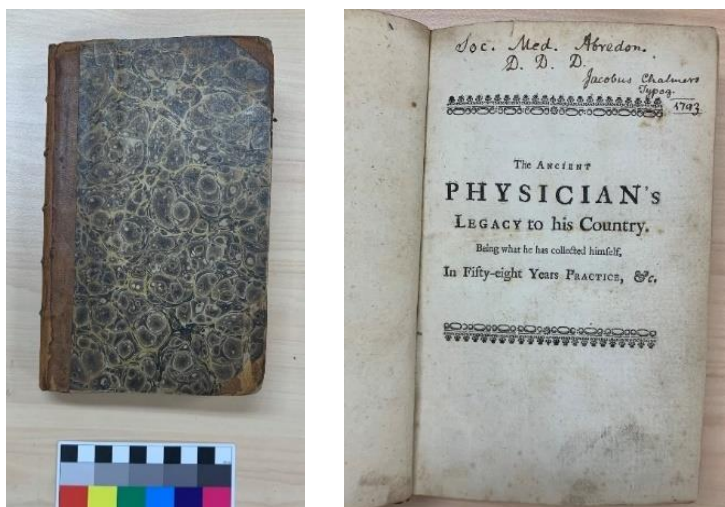
Books & documents – various owners

The Collection includes various historical medical books, some of which have provenance to individuals with known connections to the Hunter-New England region, and others which have lost their provenance.

The Ancient physician's legacy to his country (1790s)

One rare book in the Collection, dating from the late eighteenth century is: *The Ancient physician's legacy to his country being what he has collected himself in 58 years practice* / Thomas Dover MB. The book is inscribed in ink on the inside front page: 'Soc Med Abredon / D.D.D. / Jacobus Chalmers / 1793', and stamped 'MED. CHIR. SOC. ABERDEEN'. The donor of this book to the Collection is not known. This book appears to have been owned by the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society in Aberdeen, Scotland, which was formed in 1789 (as the Aberdeen Medical Society) by a group of medical students. The group changed its named to the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society in 1811.³⁰ No details about Jacobus Chalmers have been found online.

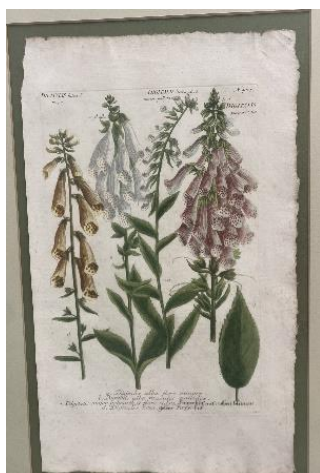
The Society assembled a large library from 1791 onwards, and it contained many rare and valuable books. In 1967 many of the library's old and rare medical books were sold, which may be when this book was purchased for a private collection – perhaps by an Australian doctor doing postgraduate studies in the UK.



³⁰ Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society, <https://med-chi.co.uk/heritage/archive/documents/history-of-aberdeen-medico-chirurgical-society/>

Digitalis print – 1700s

Dr Richard Addinall, a surgeon at the John Hunter Hospital, donated a framed antiquarian book plate print of a foxglove plant (above right), used to make digitalis heart medication. Dr Addinall purchased this in England in 1980 from an antiquarian bookshop. This item was not sighted during the site visit for this Assessment, so it cannot be confirmed if it is an eighteenth-century print, or a more modern reprint.



Lunacy in Many Lands (1887)

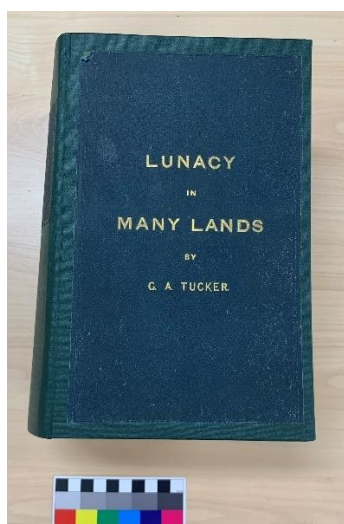
A very important text in the Collection is *Lunacy in many lands* / GA Tucker, 1887 – significant both for its association with its owner and for the scientific content and research potential it offers. No provenance or donor details have been recorded, but the book contains a book plate of Robert George Dundas Fitzgerald (1846-1933), who was a New Zealand born Australian politician, and Member of the NSW Legislative Council.³¹

Dr G. A. Tucker was commissioned to research and write *Lunacy in Many Lands* by the NSW authorities, and it marked a change towards the administration of more humane and rehabilitative approaches to mental health. The report was based on extensive international research, and Tucker's work critiqued the existing institutional models and proposed patient-centred care. It had direct impacts on the development of mental health facilities and practices in NSW and around Australia.

Dr Ann Hardy of the University of Newcastle was consulted about this book for this Assessment, and believes it to be a highly significant text for the history of mental health care in Australia:

Lunacy in Many Lands (1885) holds significant historical and intellectual value for its profound influence on the evolution of mental healthcare in Australia... it provided a crucial impetus for the adoption of more humane and rehabilitative approaches, known as moral therapy, in the treatment of individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental illness... Its significance lies in its role as a pivotal document that contributed to a paradigm shift away from purely medical or custodial models towards a more holistic understanding of care.

³¹ Robert George Dundas Fitzgerald, https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/profiles/fitzgerald_robert-george-dundas.aspx

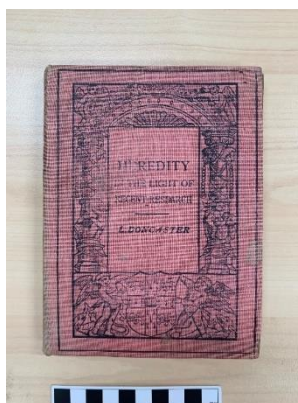
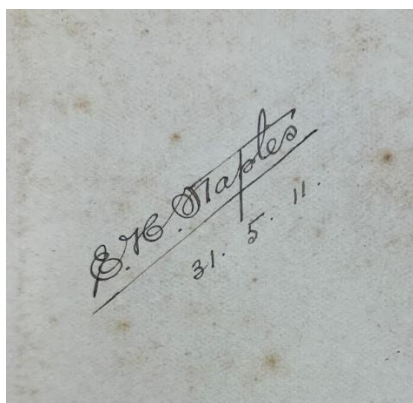


The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire (1902)

A copy of *The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire*, volume 1, January-June 1902 is held in the Collection. No donor or provenance details are recorded. On the collection inventory list, this book had been ascribed to Professor William Walters, but he confirmed that he was not the donor of this book in a telephone conversation on 14 May 2025. Several copies of this volume are held in university and public libraries in Australia. More research is needed to determine the history of this volume and its use.

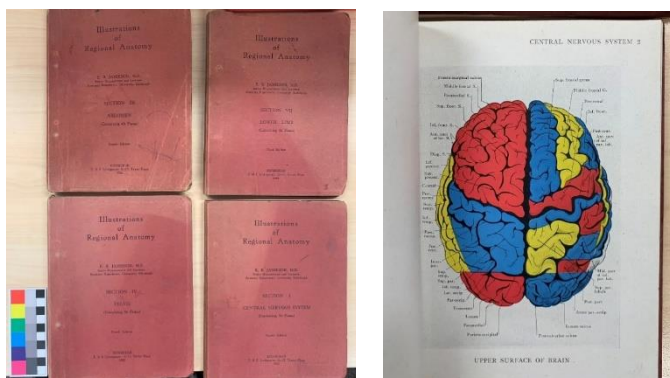
Heredity in the light of recent research (1910)

Heredity in the light of recent research / L Doncaster, 1910 – no provenance or donor are known but the book has been signed in ink on the inside front cover by E.H. Staples, with the date 31.5.11. Further research may reveal some of the book's history. This work, part of the Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature series, provides an overview of heredity, focusing on the work of Mendel and the emerging field of Mendelian genetics. It was designed to be a comprehensive and easily understandable guide to the new science of genetics. Doncaster's book provides a valuable historical perspective on the early development of genetics and its influence on our understanding of inheritance.



Illustrations of Regional Anatomy (1942)

Four volumes of *Illustrations of Regional Anatomy* / Jamieson, 1942, are in the Collection. No provenance or donor details have been recorded for these books. These are very common human anatomy reference books, and copies are held in numerous libraries around Australia. They hold research potential for study into the understanding of anatomy in the 1940s.



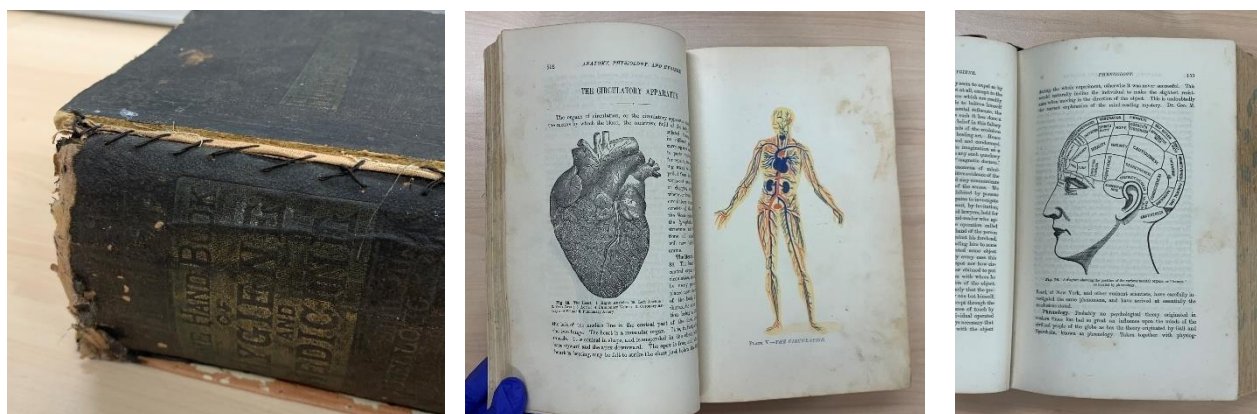
Home medical books

Three early twentieth century books in the Collection form a significant group for their research potential and socio-historical value. Intended for use in domestic contexts by people with no medical training, the focus of these books is on home remedies and preventative measures, since access to more advanced medical care and treatment was limited.

The home hand-book of domestic hygiene and rational medicine (1902)

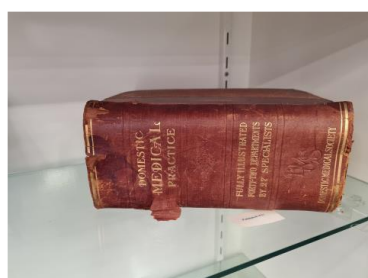
This book was donated by Dr Kerry Fagan, a retired Senior Cytogeneticist at Hunter Area Pathology, but no provenance details were recorded. This large book appears to have been well-used, with the spine binding having been roughly sewn onto the front cover with black thread. First published in 1891, this book was written by American businessman John Harvey Kellogg (of the cereal product fame) and was common in the late nineteenth century for use in domestic contexts. A few copies are held in public libraries in Australia, and the text has been digitised and made available online.³² This rare and important book offers great research potential to understand medical treatments and knowledge available to laypeople in domestic contents in the late nineteenth century.

³² *The home hand-book of domestic hygiene and rational medicine* (1896), <https://archive.org/details/J.H.KelloggHomeHand-bookOfDomesticHygieneAndRationalMedicine1896>



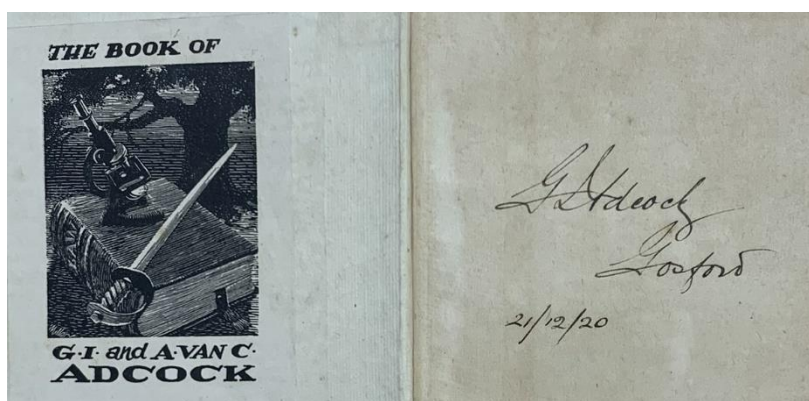
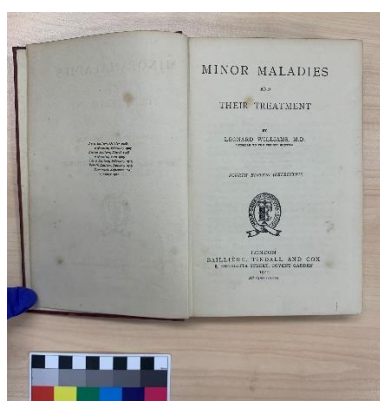
Domestic medical practice (1917)

A copy of the large volume, *Domestic medical practice : Fully illustrated forty-two departments by 27 specialists* / 1917, was donated by Mrs R. Blackmore, via Newcastle Public Library in 1989. No provenance details were recorded, but this book may have been used in Mrs Blackmore's family. This book, providing medical advice for households, was first published in 1913 and continued in popularity with many reprints, and a revision in 1940.



Minor maladies and their treatment (1920)

A copy of another common home medical reference book from the early twentieth century, *Minor maladies and their treatment* / Leonard Williams, 1920, is in the Collection. It has a book plate for G.I. and 'I VAN C Adcock' of Gosford, and it is signed 'G. Adcock / Gosford / 21/12/20'. No details are known about G. Adcock or how it entered the collection. Further research may reveal some details. This book is of interest for the developments it reflects in health care provision in the 1920s – a period of change after World War I and the devastating influenza pandemic.



Dr Samuel Gardiner objects

A few books and items in the collection relate to Dr Samuel Gardiner (1892-1958), a surgeon and physician, and the medical superintendent of the Royal Newcastle Hospital in 1915-7. Gardiner was a graduate of a Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery from the Medical School of the University of Sydney, where he studied between 1915 and 1928.³³ He opened a practice in Hamilton, then moved to Watt Street, Newcastle. At the Mater Hospital, he introduced tutoring for the nursing staff and training of junior doctors. Gardiner was largely responsible for the establishment of the Mater's pathology department, which opened in 1937. The library that opened in the David Maddison Building in 1981 was named the Samuel Gardiner Memorial Library.

Books donated by Gardiner include *Determinative bacteriology. V. 1 Atlas* / Lehmann-Neumann-Breed, 1929, signed on the inside cover 'From Dr S. S. Gardiner'; and *Oxford Surgery v. 2 1919*.



Other objects in the Collection relating to Samuel Gardiner include a silver-plated ink well set with glass inkpots, engraved with 'Pres to Dr SS Gardiner by the Students of St John's Ambulance class Hamilton 1926', and a fountain pen in its case. The Collection also holds a framed colour portrait of Samuel Gardiner and the sign from the 'Samuel Gardiner Pathology Department' from the Royal Newcastle Hospital.



³³ 'Our Alumni: Samuel Stoops Gardiner', University of Sydney, <https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine/museum/alumni/viewuserdetail.php?id=11675>

Professor William Walters obstetrics objects

A small group of books, obstetrics instruments and an Aboriginal artwork were donated to the collection by Emeritus Professor William Allen Willcox Walters AM (b. 1933, Adelaide). Walters is a retired gynaecologist/obstetrician, who, in 2005, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (AM) for 'service to reproductive medicine as an educator and researcher, and to human bioethics, particularly in the area of in vitro fertilisation'.³⁴

Professor Walters graduated from the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Science, and a PhD from the University of London. In the mid-1950s, Walters was house physician and surgeon at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, then obstetric house surgeon and registrar, Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital, Adelaide, 1957-1958. He then moved to the UK and was senior house officer gynaecology, Jessop Hospital Women, Sheffield (1958-1959) and Medical Research Council Research fellow and tutor, Hammersmith Hospital, London (1960-1963). In 1963 Walters was appointed lecturer in obstetrics-gynaecology at the University of Aberdeen (1963-1965), returning to Australia in 1965 to take up a position as senior lecturer obstetrics-gynaecology at Monash University in Melbourne (1965-1970). Between 1970 and 1985 he was Associate Professor at Monash University, and Professor of Reproductive Medicine at the University of Newcastle from 1985, where he also served as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, until 1996. Since 1991, he was Chairman of the Division of Obstetrics-Gynaecology at the John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle.

Walters has also served as Chair of the Maternal and Perinatal Committee, NSW Health Department, a member of the Maternity Services Advising Committee, since 1998, and as a member of the Hunter

Area Health Svc. Board (1994-1998).³⁵ Professor Walters is a Fellow Royal Society Medicine, Royal College Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Royal Australian College Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and a member of the Australian College Sexual Health Physicians, New York Academy Sciences, Australian Perinatal Society and Australian Society Reproductive Biology.

Obstetrics books

Two obstetrics books were donated to the Collection by Professor Walters, including *A Treatise of the theory and practice of midwifery* / William Smellie (London, 1752 1st ed. facsimile 1974) (donated 2004). This book was written by Scottish apothecary and 'man midwife', William Smellie, who used innovative and modern birthing techniques and is now considered the father of British obstetrics.³⁶ Smellie kept extensive case notes on his patients, which formed the basis of the three-volumed work *A Treatise of the Theory and Practice of Midwifery* (1752, 1764), making him the best-known name in midwifery in Britain.

³⁴ THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY 2005 HONOURS The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following appointments and awards: (2005, June 13). *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. Special (National : 1977 - 2012)*, p. 11. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article240489112>

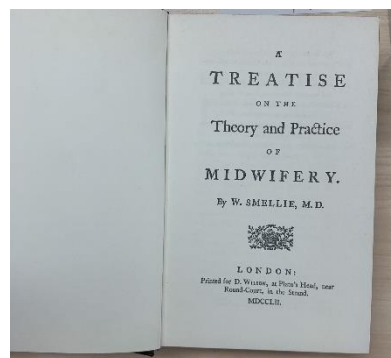
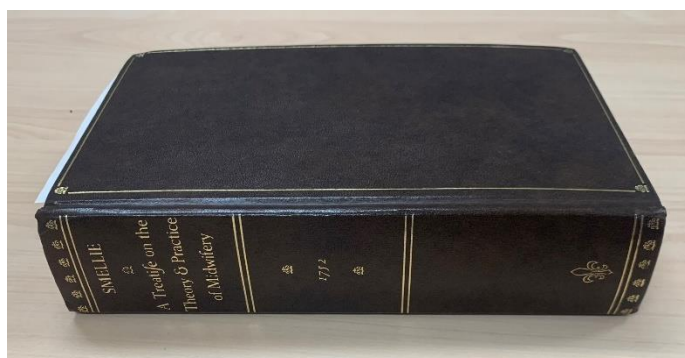
³⁵ Professor William Walters, https://prabook.com/web/william_allen_willcox_walters/3536507

³⁶ William Smellie, <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/news-events/latest-news/william-smellie-apothecary-man-midwife-and-the-father-of-british-obstetrics/>

When Walters graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1956, he went to the UK to further his studies to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology (which was not offered in Australia at the time), Walters remembers browsing in various book shops in the UK, and one day he noticed this book by Smellie, which he knew as a highly prized and valuable historical work on English midwifery: 'I spotted this in a most unlikely book shop which was selling all sorts of rather common [modern] books. This historical work hit me as I looked at the shelf, and I thought, 'I'd better get this'.³⁷

A Treatise of the theory and practice of midwifery provides case notes, an obstetrical atlas and a midwifery textbook, and is a key text in the history of obstetrics, since it marked a change in methods and attitudes to the practice. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, childbirth took place in an almost exclusively female space, but from the mid-eighteenth century, male practitioners were increasingly involved in labour and delivery. Smellie's book marks this important era of change.

A search of Trove indicates that there are no other catalogued copies of this book held in public libraries in Australia. There are, however, numerous copies of the original editions and facsimiles held in public libraries in the UK.



Another book donated by Professor Walters is *Kielland's Forceps* / E. Parry Jones (Butterworth: 1952, London). This reference text was also acquired by Professor Walters during his medical studies in the UK in the 1960s. Receipts inside the cover of the book indicate that Walters purchased it from H.K. Lewis & Co, medical and scientific publishers and booksellers, 136 Gower Street, WC1, London, UK. A former owner of the book has inscribed their name on the inside first page, but the name is illegible, preventing further research about this owner.

This book outlines the use of Kielland's forceps – the most common type of obstetric forceps used to facilitate vaginal delivery when the foetal head is in a malposition and rotation is needed. The forceps were invented in 1908 by Norwegian Gynaecologist Christian Caspar Gabriel Kielland (1871-1941). The author of this book, Edward Parry Jones, was a consultant obstetrician-gynaecologist at St Asaph General and Maternity Hospital, Wales, in the 1950s. Professor Walters remembers that Kielland's forceps were still used when he was practicing in Newcastle.

³⁷ Professor William Walters, telephone communication, 13 May 2025.

Baby in a coolamon sculpture

A particularly unique artwork in the Collection is a carved wooden sculpture of a nearly life-sized baby in a coolamon, depicting the traditional Australian Indigenous method of carrying infants. This artwork was purchased in 1993 by Dr Owen James, then Executive General Manager of the John Hunter Hospital, for display at the hospital. Prior to its purchase from the Outback Art commercial gallery in Merewether, NSW, Dr James asked Professor William Walters to view it and confirm its suitability as an artwork for display in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department of the Hospital. James purchased the artwork, but since there was no secure place for it to be displayed, it was loaned to the Gardiner Library, where it was displayed with the Historical Collection. The purchase of this Indigenous artwork was also intended to reflect the University of Newcastle's commitment to Indigenous education.³⁸

A certificate provided by Roy Ryan of Outback Art at the time of purchase (now held by HNE Health Libraries) indicates that the carving was one of three known to have been made by Aboriginal artist Ruben Jangala of Alice Springs, Central Australia. The certificate states that 'Despite repeated requests, the artist will not be persuaded to continue carving and we of the art world are deprived of his great gift'. The location of the other two sculptures is unknown. They may be held in private collections.

The name 'Jangala' (or Tjangala) is used by several Indigenous artists from Central Australia. It is a Warlpiri word, meaning 'man' or 'person', and is often used as a title for Indigenous artists, elders, or those with significant knowledge and cultural authority. Other Alice Springs artists with the name Jangala include Adrian Jangala Robertson, Jerry Jangala Patrick and Thompson Jangala Brown. Stephen Williamson, Curator, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, was consulted about the origin of this artwork and the identity of the artist. He noted that:

Jangala is a common Warlpiri skin name from the Tanami Desert, north west of Alice Springs centred around Yuendumu, Lajamanu and Willowra. I've haven't seen anything like this piece and it's quite dissimilar to other carvings done across the region which concentrate on weapons, artefacts, animals etc. I will speak to a colleague about it to see if he can shed more light on it.³⁹

Cherish McDonald conducted extensive research in 2024-5 and contacted numerous individuals and Indigenous art experts to identify the artist Ruben Jangala, and to reveal any further provenance details, but no information was found about him online. Cherish contacted Outback Art Gallery, which continues to operate in Merewether, NSW, however Roy Ryan was unable to offer any further details about the artist or the artwork.

³⁸ Professor Walters to Cherish McDonald, telephone communication, 2 April 2025.

³⁹ Stephen Williamson to Fiona Starr, email communication, May 2025.

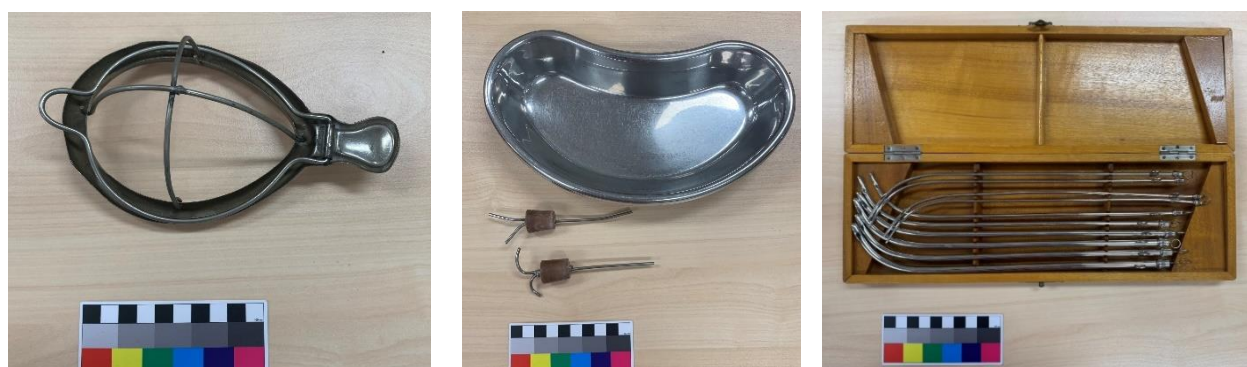


Obstetrics and anaesthetics equipment

A group of anaesthetics and obstetrics instruments donated by Professor Walters were originally owned and used by his maternal great uncle Dr Frank Willcox. He did postgraduate medical training in Edinburgh around 1900. There was no sub-specialisation training at universities then, so all students graduated as general practitioners, and if they wished, they furthered their studies in particular areas of medicine. Willcox went to do further studies in a famous clinic in Vienna, which was well known for its surgical gynaecology. While he was studying in Vienna, Frank purchased some microscope slides, which Professor Walters later acquired.

Upon returning to Australia, Willcox setup a practice as an obstetrician/gynaecologist and general practitioner in North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia. William Walters was one of the many babies born in his charge. When Frank Willcox died, he left his affairs to one of his brothers, Horace Willcox. In his old age he passed them on to William Walters, who by then had begun studying medicine.

The anaesthetics and medical equipment, which Professor Walters believes Dr Willcox used in his general practice, includes a trochar and ether introducer, ether masks, a steel dish and a tendon hammer. The obstetrics instruments include a box of uterine sounds and introducers, an intraosseous needle and trochar, self-retaining foetal destruction forceps, retractors, a pelvimeter and measuring callipers. These items are representative of standard equipment used in anaesthetics and obstetrics in Australia in the early to mid-twentieth century, and other examples are held in several medical collections around Australia. One unusual instrument in the group is a four-pronged instrument, used for dilating the cervix, which is no longer in use.



A large group of 'Camera Talks' slides, produced in London, with images of obstetric and gynaecological problems and treatments were used by Professor William Walters for illustration purposes while teaching in his roles at Monash University and Newcastle University. These slides have associative significance, as they were owned and used by Professor Walters. In Australia they are relatively rare, and are documents of teaching practices before digital screens were available, but they are reasonably common, with other examples in public collections in the UK.



Dr John Sippe instruments

Newcastle based dermatologist Dr John Sippe donated a few medical instruments to the Collection, including an ear syringe, an F. Koristka Milano vintage brass laboratory microscope, a sterling cartridge syringe, and an ophthalmoscope. At the time of donation, no provenance details about these items were recorded, nor was any information about the career of Dr John Sippe, or how and why he acquired these items. During this Assessment process, an attempt was made to contact Dr Sippe, however his telephone number listed online had been disconnected and no other contact details for him were found.

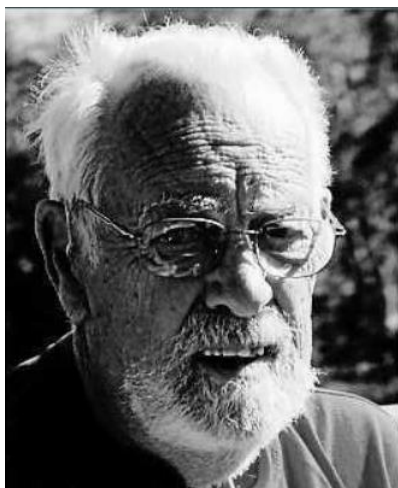


Also among Dr Sippe's donation was an early brass laboratory microscope made by F. Koristka, Milano (below left) and another laboratory microscope by Cook, Throughton & Simms, model E, from 1936, contained within timber storage box (right). No details about the history of these two microscopes was recorded at the time of donation and further research is needed to determine their provenance. These are in very good condition and are relatively rare examples of early twentieth century medical laboratory equipment and therefore offer research potential.



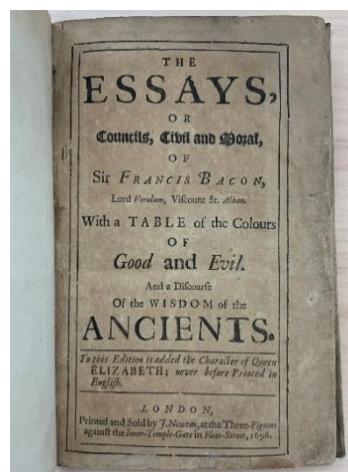
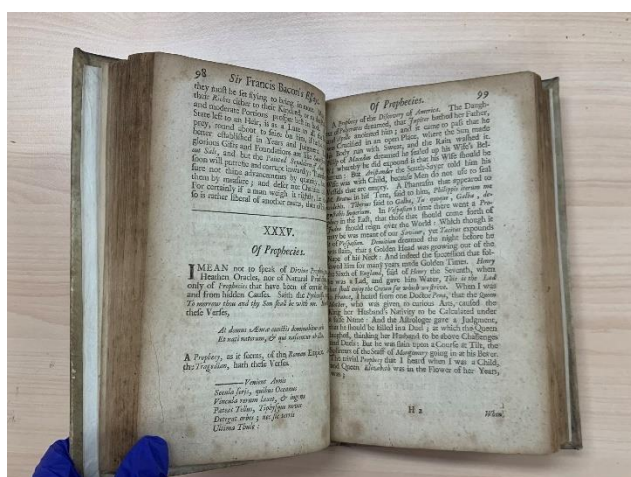
Dr Michael Partington items

Three items in the collection are thought to have been donated by Dr Michael W. Partington (1926-2014), a paediatrician who lived and worked in Newcastle. No documentation about the donation appears to have been retained, with just the notes in the Collection inventory list indicating that these were likely donated by Partington.



Dr Michael W. Partington, c.2000. Source: Legacy.com

One of these items is one of the oldest books in the collection – a copy of *The essays or Councils, Civil and Moral of Francis Bacon* (1696, London). This is a collection of essays attributed to Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the prominent English philosopher, statesman, lawyer, and author, and widely regarded as a pioneer of the scientific method. The essays cover a variety of topics including wisdom, truth, and the nature of government. It also includes 'A Table of the Colors of Good and Evil' and a discourse on 'The Wisdom of the Ancients'. Other copies of the 1696 edition of this book are held in public libraries around the world, including the University of Michigan Library and the National Library of Australia.



Dr Partington donated another early book – *Medical and Chemical Essays* / Thomas Trotter (1795, London), contains additional observations on scurvy, along with cases and remarks on chemical theories. The essays include communications from New South Wales on scurvy, potentially offering insights into the prevalence and management of the disease in the colony. A copy of this book is also held by the National Library of Australia and the Wellcome Collection, London.

One ophthalmoscope in the Collection is contained in a case made by Theodore Hamblin of London and stamped with the initials 'MWP' on the outside of the case. Although marked as donated by Dr John Sippe in the Collection inventory list, the list also questions if Dr Michael Partington was the donor. The monogrammed initials suggest that this item was owned by Dr Michael Partington.



Dr Partington was born in Sutton Coldfield, England, and he trained at Barts Medical College and Barts Hospital, London, and at the London Hospital Medical College. After graduation, he worked in hospitals in Norwich and Sheffield and became a paediatrics specialist. In 1959 Partington moved to Canada, working both as a paediatrician and as a researcher into mental and developmental disabilities. He spent many years as a paediatrician in the Angada Children's Hospital unit of Kingston General Hospital, teaching courses at Queen's, serving five years as head of Paediatrics, doing clinical outreach in multiple Ontario facilities located as far north as James Bay, and continuing to research into medical genetics.

After the death of his first wife, Partington moved to Australia and helped to establish a Medical Genetics Service in NSW. In 1989 he settled in Newcastle, NSW, with his colleague and new wife Dr Gillian Turner, another noted medical geneticist. Partington made important contributions to the understanding of genetically transmitted mental retardation such as PKU, Fragile X Syndrome and other X chromosome-related syndromes, one of them being named Partington Syndrome due to his role in identifying and describing it. He published research papers and periodical articles prolifically and was an active participant in numerous international conferences.

His Collected Works (1952-2005) are housed for reference in London, Edinburgh and Kingston. Partington had many interests beyond medicine and genetics, including social and political issues, perhaps being the reason that he collected the volume of essays by Francis Bacon.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Dr Michael Partington, obituary, <https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/thestar/name/michael-partington-obituary?id=43349747>

Dr Larry Roddick items

Two printed medical diaries and one ophthalmoscope were donated to the Collection by Dr Laurence (Larry) Roddick OAM, who was Senior Staff Specialist Paediatrician at Belmont Hospital and in the Department of General Paediatrics at John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle. In 2021 Dr Roddick was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to paediatric medicine.⁴¹

The two books are examples of commonly available medical profession diaries published by Wellcome in the UK – one is a Wellcome's Professional Nurse's Diary (1923-24) and the other is a Wellcomes Medical Diary (1925). The ophthalmoscope, made by Gowllands, dates from the early to mid-twentieth century, and was used to examine the eyes to detect and evaluate symptoms of retinal detachment or eye diseases such as glaucoma, and used for patients with signs or symptoms of high blood pressure, diabetes, or other diseases that affect the blood vessels. Numerous examples of these are held in collections across Australia. No information has been recorded about how Roddick acquired or used any of these items.



Other medical items – no provenance

Microscope & anaesthetics equipment

Several other medical items are held in the Collection including a microscope in timber case, and two pieces of equipment used in anaesthetics – a Hawksley Crista (London) haemoglobin measure in case (below centre), and a Hellige haemocytometer (red and white blood cell counter) (below right). No provenance or donor details have been recorded for these items. The microscope was manufactured by Norman H. Seward / Optical House / of 457 Bourke Street, Melbourne, VIC, maker of surveying, optical and scientific instruments. This company was established about 1900. While no other details are known about these three items, they were most likely manufactured in the early twentieth century and possibly used in the Newcastle-New England area. Further research is needed.

⁴¹ 'Remarkable Australians Recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours', <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/newsroom/featured/remarkable-australians-recognised-in-queens-birthday-honours>



Model RT Rubin test insufflator

The Health Libraries also holds a 1960s-70s Model RT Rubin test insufflator, used for determining whether fallopian tubes are occluded. No provenance or donor details for this item appear to have been recorded, Professor William Walters confirmed during a telephone conversation that this was not donated by him and he does not know its provenance. Further research is needed, although it is assumed that this item was used in a hospital in the Hunter-New England region and transferred to the library collection.



Basal Metabolism Testing Machine

Another unusual piece of medical equipment is a Jones Motor-Basal Metabolism Testing Machine, designed by Horry M. Jones and manufactured by the Middlewest Instrument Co. of Chicago, USA. This design was patented in 1937, and this example of the machine may date anywhere from 1937 to the 1960s. No provenance or donor details have been recorded for this machine, though it is highly likely that it was used in a hospital in the Hunter-New England area. Further investigations by library staff may reveal who donated it and where it was used.

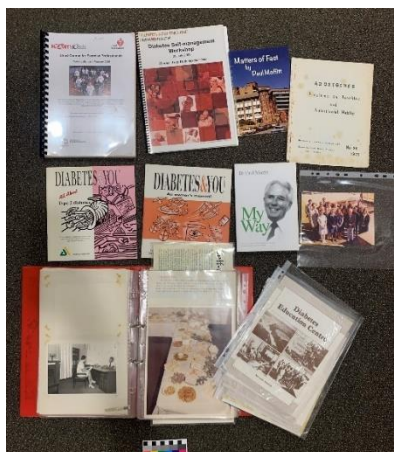
This machine was used to observe a patient's breathing patterns by using calculations for understanding breathing patterns, including respiratory rate, volume, rhythm and basal metabolism. It measured basal metabolism by determining the amount of time it took a person to consume the oxygen in the tank below the machine, circulated by the machine's motor. The higher the metabolic rate, the faster the oxygen is used up.

Several examples of these machines appear in public collections in the US, but no other example of this US-made machine has been identified in an Australian public collection.



Diabetes clinic documents

A group of printed brochures, booklets, photographs, and other ephemera in the Collection, were obtained from Melba Mensch, dietitian at the John Hunter Hospital, and the Hunter Diabetes Centre. Mensch was one of the first dietitians in Australia, and these items relate to the diabetes awareness work of Mensch and Dr Paul Moffitt, who developed a public community education program in 1972 for the Hunter-New England region, leading to the establishment of the Diabetes Education and Stabilisation Centre. One booklet of note is 'Aborigines: Problems in Teaching and Nutritional Habits' (1973).



Early medical-electrical machines

Two early medical-electrical machines in the Collection provide an important background to the development of the use of electrical current devices for medical therapy from the 1940s, represented by several examples of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) machines also held in the Collection, discussed later in this report.

One rare item in the Collection is a medical magneto-electric machine (below left). This machine was donated to the Collection by Dr Richard Addinall, who spent 40 years (from the 1980s), working at the Royal Newcastle Hospital and John Hunter Hospital. At the time of donation, no information was recorded about the provenance of the machine, but Richard Addinall was contacted during the Assessment process, and he provided further information. Addinall used to visit the Gardiner Library at the John Hunter Hospital and was inspired to donate this machine to the HNE Health Libraries Collection.⁴²

The magneto-electrical machine, dating from the late nineteenth century, was given to Dr Addinall by his elderly uncle, Harry Mason, when Richard was studying medicine in the 1960s. Harry was a wool classer who lived in Sydney (died c.1980), but it is not unknown how he acquired this machine, or whether he used it personally. The machine provided electrical nerve stimulation for the home treatment of conditions like arthritis and hand pain. The patient held onto the brass electrodes, someone else turned the crank handle, and the electrical current overloaded the pain receptors in the brain to manage pain. It functioned in the same way as a modern TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) device. At a time when medications for arthritis were yet to be invented, this machine may have offered some temporary relief but today is considered mainly ineffective. The machine is in good condition, but the rope mechanism has an old repair cotton, the twine leads to the cylindrical brass electrodes are perishing, and a nut is missing from the outside of the box.

Used to treat patients with nervous diseases in the mid to late 19th century, electromagnetic inductions machines like this one were cranked manually to generate an electromagnetic charge, resulting in a patient experiencing a tingling or muscle contraction in the body when holding the two charged electrodes. The first example of such a machine was patented in 1854 by Davis & Kidder in the United States, designed for the use of 'nervous diseases'. About the same time, the use of electricity for neuromuscular purposes was pioneered in France by Guillaume Duchenne, who published his research, theories, uses, and compared machines in *A Treatise on Localized Electrization, and its Application to Pathology and Therapeutics* published in 1855.⁴³

Magneto-electric machines were marketed from the mid to late nineteenth century for the treatment of all sorts of mental and physical illnesses, including cancer, consumption, diabetes, gangrene, heart disease, lockjaw, and spinal deformities. Many doctors had reported benefits from the introduction of an electric current to parts of the body as therapy, particularly in stimulating muscle. But their benefit is now thought to be nothing more than the placebo effect, and they are now considered to be among the many pseudo-medical treatments of the past.⁴⁴

⁴² Dr Richard Addinall, personal communication, May 2025.

⁴³ 'Civil War Artifact Across the Decades: Davis & Kidder's Patent Magneto-Electric Machine', <https://www.civilwarmed.org/surgeons-call/magneto-electric-machine/> (accessed 2 May 2025).

⁴⁴ 'Magneto electrotherapy device', Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, <https://collection.powerhouse.com.au/object/511335>



Numerous examples of the Davis & Kidder magneto-electric machine are held in US museum collections, including the National Museum of American History and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Other examples in Australia are held in the University of Melbourne medical museum, the Powerhouse Museum and the Health Museum of South Australia.

An early twentieth century electro-medical machine (above right) in the Collection, bears a metal plaque with the manufacturer's name 'Rodman & Kelaher / Electro-Medical Instrument Makers / Sydney'. These makers, who manufactured electrical equipment since about 1915,⁴⁵ at 107a Elizabeth Street, Sydney, and then at 129 Phillip Street, Sydney in the 1920s.⁴⁶ An advertisement from 1921 listed their products, including 'Ionic Medication Outfits, Medical Batteries, X-Ray Apparatus, Electric Sterilisers, Hot Air Machines, Accumulators, Spark Coils and Magnets'.⁴⁷ Further research is needed to determine the exact purpose of this machine, however it appears to be another example of a magneto-electrical device used for nerve stimulation, and having the same function and medical uses as for the example discussed above. This machine is a rare example of an Australian-made electro-medical machine from the early twentieth century and may be the only example of its kind in an Australian public collection.

⁴⁵ See for example, WELLINGTON DISTRICT HOSPITAL. (1915, October 14). *Wellington Times (NSW: 1899 - 1954)*, p. 5. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article143390240>

⁴⁶ Rodman & Kelaher, electro-medical instrument makers, 129 Phillip St (25/06/1925), [A-00006447]. City of Sydney Archives, accessed 12 May 2025, <https://archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/nodes/view/567092>

⁴⁷ Advertising (1921, November 10). *Freeman's Journal (Sydney, NSW: 1850 - 1932)*, p. 40. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article116738216>

Newcastle Mental Hospital objects

Straitjackets

A leather restraint belt from the Newcastle Mental Hospital is also among the Collection. This belt may date from the late nineteenth century, when the hospital was known as the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane. This restraint would have been used to control hand movement or used in combination with a straitjacket to completely subdue uncontrollable patients.



The Collection also includes four straitjackets used at the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane / Newcastle Mental Hospital (most recently named James Fletcher Hospital). One is displayed at the Mater Hospital library, while the other three are in storage. The designs are all slightly different, suggesting that these may have been used in different periods. Two are stamped with the numbers '2' and '3', perhaps indicating the number of the jacket from the set owned by the hospital.

No details about the age or use of these straitjackets have been recorded. They most likely date from the late nineteenth to early mid twentieth century and were in use at the Newcastle Mental Hospital for the management of patients with mental illness. Cherish McDonald suspects these may have been transferred to the library Collection in about 2006-7 when the NSW Mental Health Act changed and the James Fletcher Hospital was moved to the Calvary Mater Hospital.

These straitjackets would have been used to subdue and control psychiatric patients at risk of harming themselves or others at the Newcastle Mental Hospital. This method was used routinely in psychiatric hospitals around the world, until 1952, when psychotropic drugs like chlorpromazine became available to treat mental illnesses. These jackets may have been used into the late twentieth century, but they were generally considered outdated and inhumane by that time.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ 'Straitjacket', St Louis Science Center, <https://www.slscc.org/straitjacket/#:~:text=Around%20the%201950s%20new%20understandings.until%20the%20late%2020th%20century!> (accessed 10 May 2025).



Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) machines

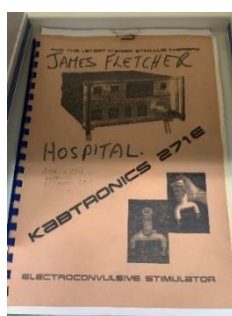
The Collection includes several electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) machines, transferred from the James Fletcher Hospital (formerly Newcastle Mental Hospital). ECT machines are used to deliver a carefully controlled electrical current to the brain to induce a brief seizure.⁴⁹ ECT was first introduced in 1940 in Europe and North America and proved to be effective treatment for a variety of neurological and psychiatric conditions, including major depression. The first known use of ECT in Australia was in August

⁴⁹ 'A Brief History of Electroconvulsive Therapy', <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2020.160103> (accessed 5 May 2025).

1941 at Parkside Mental Hospital in Adelaide.⁵⁰ It is likely that ECT was used at the Newcastle Mental Hospital not long after that date. Since the 1940s, improvements in machines and refinements in administration methods mean that ECT remains an important part of modern psychiatric treatment.

The Collection also includes various mid to late twentieth century ECT machines, including a conditioning therapy stimulator in a blue-grey case (below top left), dating from the 1950s, made by Ramsey-Coote Instruments, Victoria. This stimulator was used in Ward 13 at the Newcastle Mental Hospital from about 1960, for aversive therapy. The unpleasant electrical stimulus was used to deter patients from unwanted behaviours such as smoking, alcoholism, sexual disorders, obesity, stuttering and drug abuse. A maximum of 750 volts were delivered to the patient's fingers or via an armband.⁵¹

Various other electroconvulsive stimulators are also held in the Collection, all of which were used at the Newcastle Mental Hospital from the 1960s to 1980s. This group includes printed manuals for the machines, adding greatly to their research potential and general scientific significance.



Site plan, books and documents

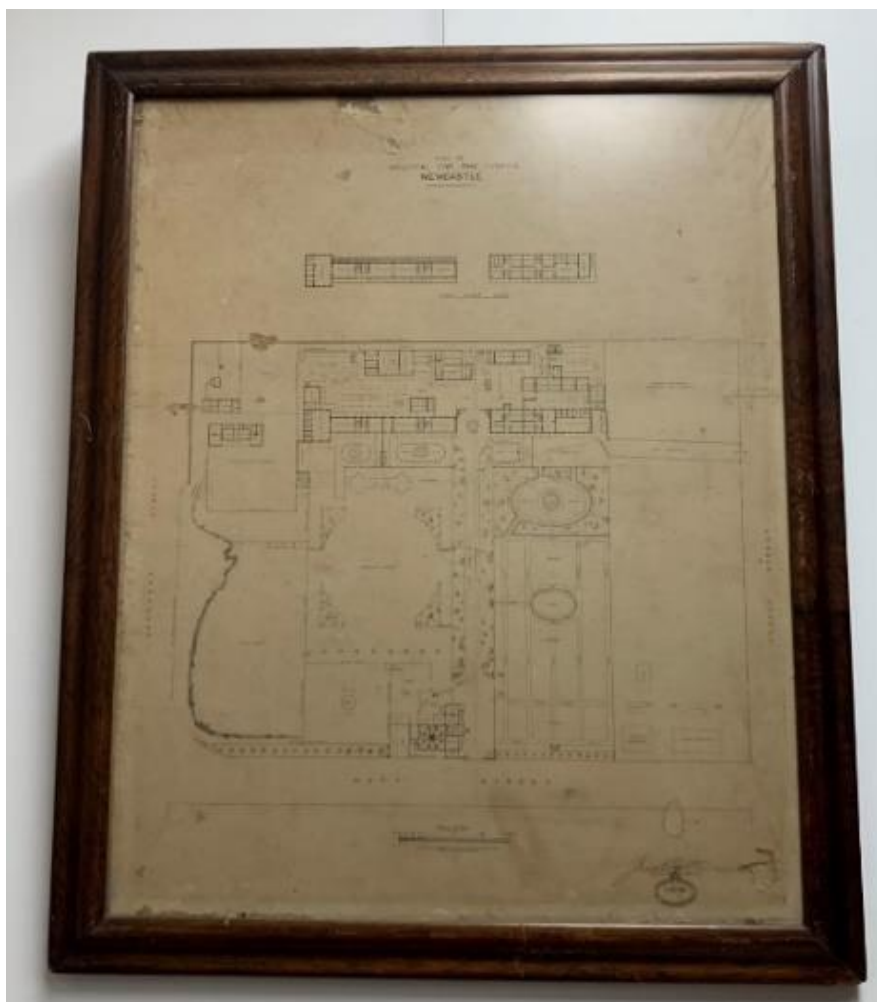
A framed plan of the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane dating from 2 December 1880, is held in the Collection. It shows the two former military barracks near the top, with that on the left accommodating male patients and that on the right, the females. Newcastle University scholars Hardy and Cushing note

⁵⁰ Mitchell PB, Sengoz A. 'The early history of convulsive therapies in Australia', *Med J Aust.* 1995 Dec 4-18;163(11-12):624-7. doi: 10.5694/j.1326-5377.1995.tb124773.x

⁵¹ Gardiner Library display label for the conditioning therapy stimulator, HNE Health Libraries.

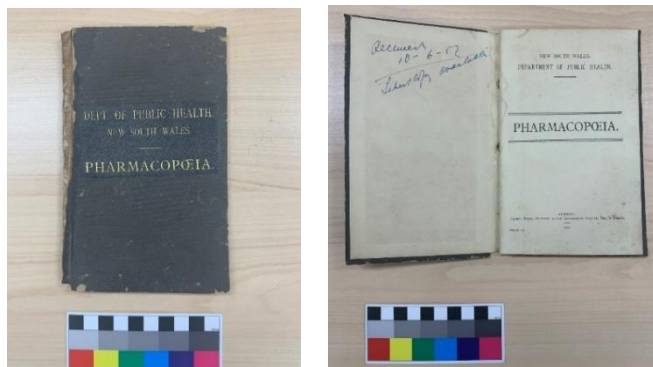
that the 'site design demonstrates the efforts made to provide a rational, self-sufficient and sensorally rich environment'.⁵²

The Collection also includes a certificate for the registration of Newcastle Mental Hospital as a training school for mental nurses in 1926. This document is a rare example of the administration of the Newcastle Mental Hospital, and evidence of the hospital's important role as a training school for nurses specialising in the treatment of mental health.



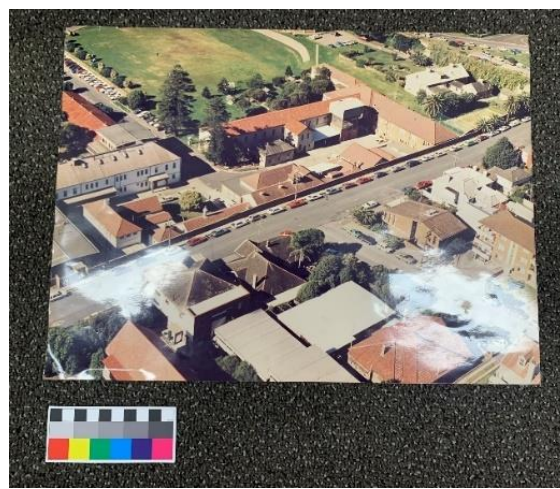
⁵² Hardy and Cushing, 144.

A NSW Department of Public Health *Pharmacopœia* from 1941 in the Collection may have been used at the James Fletcher Hospital. A copy of the *Royal Newcastle Hospital Pharmacopoeia* / 1965 (2nd ed.) also in the Collection has clear provenance to Royal Newcastle Hospital. These books have significance as historical documents of the limited medications available in the 1940s-1960s.



Historical photographs

Several large format photographs are held in the Collection and these appear to relate to the James Fletcher Hospital. They include three large photos of what appear to be staff cricket and hockey teams from the 'Watt St Hospital' (Newcastle Mental Hospital) from 1938 and 1955. They also include aerial photos of the hospital buildings from the late twentieth century.



Relationship between the Collection & buildings

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection is stored and displayed in the HNE Health Library, Level 4, Mental Health Administration Building, Calvary Mater Hospital, Waratah, NSW. Most of the collection is stored in the office area of the library, with some items on open display on shelves around the library.

The Collection has been located at the HNE Health Libraries since it was established in the early 1990s at the Gardiner Library in the John Hunter Hospital. Aside from the John Irvine Hunter sub-collection, many items have clear provenance to use by medical doctors or in hospitals in the Hunter-New England district, or from use in the Gardiner Library.

While the locally relevant books and objects in the Collection are not directly related to the Calvary Mater Hospital, the HNE Health Library at the Calvary Mater Hospital is a logical place for them to be located, due to the excellent storage conditions in the building and the availability of library staff for the management of the Collection. Should this library be re-located to another HNE LHD location, the Historical Collection could equally be well-located at new library.

For the remainder of the collection – including many of the rare books and the John Irvine Hunter collection, there is no historical relationship between the Collection items and the buildings or local history. In the 1990s, when the John Hunter Hospital was recently opened, the donation of the John Irvine Hunter collection to the hospital's library was seen as a logical link, since the owner of the books had the same name as the other two John Hunters after which the hospital was named (and one of which had a local historical connection). It should be noted that, in hindsight, the JIH collection has a far greater historical connection with the University of Sydney.

The group of objects from the former Newcastle Mental Hospital, despite not having any direct relationship with the Calvary Mater Hospital, are well located there, since the Mater is now a regional leader in mental health treatment.



Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Waratah, NSW, Australia [c.1960's], [A8803-P1249]. University of Newcastle Living Histories, accessed 01/05/2025, <https://livinghistories.newcastle.edu.au/nodes/view/18559>

Role of the Collection in the community

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection represents two distinct themes – the life and work of John Irvine Hunter, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney, and the history of health care in the Hunter-New England region of NSW.

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection, while currently not well known publicly, has great potential as a research resource for professional and academic researchers, and it also offers opportunities for small displays for the enjoyment of visitors to the library, and online digital exhibitions or catalogues of the collection material to provide enjoyment and information for a wider audience.

The Collection is a valuable resource for a range of projected stakeholders including library patrons (medical staff and students), Hunter New England Local Health District staff, academic researchers, and the local community, with an educational role for secondary and tertiary students. It offers a wealth of information for academic researchers investigating the life and work of Professor Hunter, approaches to teaching anatomy and zoology at the University of Sydney in the early twentieth century, the history and developments in the provision of healthcare in the Hunter-New England Region, and approaches to the treatment of mental health patients at the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane. More broadly, the Collection is valued by the community of past and current health care staff of the Hunter-New England. Cataloguing and digitisation of this Collection would enable the broader local health district to benefit by engaging with organisational history and a collective understanding of the important history of medical care in this region.

The books and medical equipment in the Collection represent over a century of professional learning and patient treatment and care, which has affected the lives of thousands of students, doctors and patients. The books in the Collection carry the names of individuals who have carefully acquired, read and stored these precious texts, expanding their knowledge and delivering improved treatments and care for thousands of patients. The instruments and equipment also reflect the way doctors and nurses in NSW, particularly the HNE district, improved livelihoods and delivered decades of treatment and care to patients in NSW.

John Irvine Hunter descendants

The JIH collection is highly valued by Hunter's grandson, Professor David Hunter (Richard Doll Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine, Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford, UK) who is proud of his grandfather's contribution, as reflected in the collection:

As the only grandchild of John Irvine Hunter it means a lot to me to know that the John Hunter Hospital is named after him and John Hunter the British surgeon/scientist and John Hunter the second Governor of NSW and that the Library holds a collection of my grandfather's books and papers. My grandfather came from an impoverished background, and courtesy of a far-sighted Headmaster in Albury and a scholarship to Fort Street High School in Sydney he received the education he needed to be admitted to Medical School and then become the youngest Professor ever appointed to the University of Sydney...

When I gave a lecture at the Hospital in 2008 one of the physicians had discovered something unknown to our family – John Hunter was nominated for a Nobel Prize prior to his death by John MacLeod, one of the discoverers of insulin. The collection of his books and papers is an important archive for future historians, and I would like to think his story might inspire current and future health professionals to engage in clinical research.

Professor David Hunter, April 2025
Richard Doll Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine,
Nuffield Department of Population Health,
University of Oxford, UK

Fort Street High School and Wesley College

The JIH collection is also valued more widely, but organisations connected with Hunter's life, including Albury High School, Wesley College, and Fort Street High School. In the school's yearbook of 1981, John Irvine Hunter was remembered fondly, and the hope that his legacy would inspire future students to strive for greatness:

Acknowledged as one of Fort Street's greatest scholars, if not even the greatest, is Dr John Irvine Hunter. His untimely death at the age of 26 in London cut short a brilliant future for a man who might well have become the foremost person of science of the age. Fort Street honours his learning in the bronze plaque that adorns the school's entrance foyer. This brilliant son of the school, eminent professor of anatomy, is honoured in the name of Hunter chosen last year as one of the House names of the school in appreciation of his contribution to human living. His memory is evoked annually in the awarding of the John Hunter Memorial Prize to the best student entering the School of Medicine in the University of Sydney...

It was in order to commemorate the association of the late Professor John Irvine Hunter that his contemporaries and other Old Boys decided to erect the bronze mural tablet, bearing his likeness and an appropriate inscription. This action was intended to establish a permanent memorial of his achievements and to hand on to Fortians of future generations the inspiration of his noble life and work. To read through the list of subscribers to the fund is in itself an inspiration – men who in their turn have left their name upon the pages of Australia's history. *Non omnis morietur* runs the plaque's inscription – Not all dies. And surely the name and work of John Irvine Hunter will always be treasured in the annals of Fort Street.

The Fortian (1981), 65-66.

Current Mater & John Hunter Hospital staff

Many current medical staff of the John Hunter Hospital are supporters of the Museum and Collection and its role in recording the history of the hospital and local health care history. Among them are Julie Tait, Executive General Manager of the hospital:

John Hunter Hospital carries forward a significant legacy with its connection to the historically relevant Royal Newcastle Hospital and of course its namesake Professor John Irvine Hunter. The responsibility of being stewards of past memorabilia both remembered, and tangible is something that can be put to the side in a busy hospital context.

We are so pleased and proud to have the HNE Library Service to entrust this legacy and responsibility with. The Library Service safeguards the personal diaries, books and manuscripts of Prof Hunter and ensures them in perpetuity for future staff, and community members.

JHH was built on the history of remarkable medical histories and as such we owe the past to continue this legacy and encompass innovation, growth and curiosity as we move towards our future.

I feel secure in knowing the HNE Library Services will hold our history for JHH, the broader HNE District and indeed our community.

Julie Tait, May 2025
Executive General Manager
John Hunter Hospital

In a similar manner, Angela Smith, District Manager of the HNE Health Libraries is also a keen supporter of the Historical Collection and considers the library's role as essential to the collecting and preservation of the health care history of the region:

The historical resources held by our Library service are a deeply treasured part of our collective history, offering powerful insight into the evolution of medicine and the people who have shaped it. At the heart of this collection is the John Irvine Hunter Memorial Collection, a gift made possible through the dedicated research and passionate advocacy of Mr John Algie... Thanks to his efforts, the story of John Irvine Hunter... has been honoured and remembered through a collection of rare and personal materials.

Among the most significant of these is a pristine notebook titled Practical Zoology, written entirely in John Hunter's own hand during his first year of Medicine at the University of Sydney, complete with intricate illustrations and annotations... These invaluable materials – painstakingly collected and generously donated – have been entrusted to the Library with the promise that they will be preserved, cherished, and ultimately made accessible to a wider audience through future digitisation efforts, ensuring that generations to come may draw inspiration from Hunter's extraordinary life and legacy.

While the John Irvine Hunter Collection holds a place of special prominence, it forms part of a broader, archive of historical items that reflect the medical innovations and practices of times past. From early anaesthetic and obstetric equipment to 1920s medical diaries and microscopes, including items linked to Dr Samuel Gardiner – the namesake of the Gardiner Library Service (now HNE Health Libraries) – each object tells a story of care, progress, and curiosity. These resources serve not only as historical artefacts but as tangible links to the ingenuity and dedication that have shaped modern health care. They are a reminder to the health professionals of the Hunter New England region, and the wider community, of the shoulders on which we stand, and of the visionaries who have laid the path for the future.

Angela Smith, May 2025
Liaison Librarian/Research Support, District Manager
HNE Health Libraries

Further support for Collection and its value for the community was expressed by Erin Daley, Volunteer Manager, Hunter New England Mental Health Volunteer Service:

I'm writing to express my strong support for the preservation of our historical collection in HNELHD.

The health care services we provide across HNELHD are very much a part of the lives of individuals, families, and communities across our region. Our work is not just clinical – it is emotional, relational, human and community-based. We work with people during some of their most vulnerable moments: during illness (both physical and mental), recovery, birth, loss, death, trauma and healing. This is work of immense significance, and the history of it ought to be acknowledged and remembered. Preserving our historical collection is one way we ensure that human stories are not lost.

Of course, the spaces in which we provide care also carry their own historical weight. Many of our sites have significant historical, cultural, and architectural value. Places like the James Fletcher campus in Newcastle not only have a healthcare history but are also part of the social fabric of our region. The collection would help capture the past and current meaning and significance of these spaces—not just as buildings.

Here's some other reasons why I think it's important to preserve our historical collections:

- Promote accountability and transparency, allowing HNELHD to reflect on its legacy and remain accountable to the community we serve.
- Reducing stigma – making our history visible can help challenge shame and silence, while encouraging compassion and understanding (particularly in mental health)
- Demonstrate progress in health care, and help us acknowledge outdated/harmful past practices while recognising progress made in terms of equity, safety, compassion etc.
- Help tell human stories and elevate voices of those who may have been marginalised, silenced and unseen in the past.
- Enrich community engagement with HNELHD – a collection that is preserved and shared becomes a community resource, which can then support education and research.

I hope the HNELHD collection can become the foundation for a future museum and/or public-facing space – physical or digital.

Former John Hunter Hospital staff

The donation of numerous medical books, instruments and equipment indicates the interest and support the Collection has for retired doctors, professors and other medical staff of the HNE region. These include Emeritus Professor William Walters, Professor of Reproductive Medicine at the University of Newcastle, and Chairman of the Division of Obstetrics-Gynaecology at the John Hunter Hospital:

I have always regarded the Libraries as being central to the work of the health system and deserving of our utmost support.

Emeritus Professor William Walters, March 2025

Dr Ross Kerridge, former Director of Anaesthesiology at the John Hunter Hospital, and current Mayor of the City of Newcastle, feels that the collection is of great importance for the Newcastle community, and more broadly, to Australian healthcare history:

The HNE Health Libraries historical collection is deeply valued by hospital staff and is a significant asset for the broader Newcastle community.

The Hospitals of Newcastle have had a long and significant history of innovation and leadership in clinical services, and this is reflected in some of the records in the historical collection, making it valuable not just to Newcastle, but to Australian healthcare history generally...

The preservation and digitisation of these works will contribute to Newcastle's knowledge of its medical past, and support education of our future medical workforce.

As a Specialist Anaesthetist, I spent most of my career working in the public health system, throughout Newcastle Hospitals. I have also been a Medical Academic and Researcher at the University of Newcastle. Last year, I was honoured to be appointed at the 15th Lord Mayor of this great city.

Throughout all my various roles, I have found value in the historical collections and recognising the importance of maintaining and preserving it for future generations to come.

Dr Ross Kerridge, May 2025

Former Director of Anaesthesiology, John Hunter Hospital, current Mayor of Newcastle

University academics

The Collection is broadly valuable to the community of current and future tertiary students and academic researchers, particularly the JIH collection, as expressed by Dr Denise Donlon of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney:

The collection of books, personal notebooks and memorial plaque relating to Professor John Irvine Hunter, held by the HNE Health Libraries, is a unique and rare collection. John Irvine Hunter was Challis Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney and is widely regarded as one of the brightest minds in his field in Australian medical history. The scientific notebooks, which include his detailed drawings, are unique and invaluable records of the work of this brilliant scholar and teacher, and his published books from his professional and personal library, which are signed in his hand and bear his stamp, document his life and fields of professional reading, research interests and teaching areas.

As Curator of the Shellshear Museum of Physical Anthropology and Comparative Anatomy at the University of Sydney, I am familiar with John Hunter's work, particularly his research into the anthropology of Indigenous Australians and the Piltdown skull. In fact, the museum has an exhibition on Piltdown and includes Hunter's involvement in the reconstruction. I feel that his notebooks and professional library have great research potential - for a future detailed biography, to further understand his contribution to science and teaching, and to document his extraordinary legacy. I would be pleased to see this important collection fully documented and made available online for researchers and students to access.

Dr Denise Donlon, April 2025

Senior Lecturer and

Curator – Shellshear Museum of Comparative Anatomy and Physical Anthropology
Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney

Many of the specialised medical books and instruments in the Collection hold great interest for medical history researchers. For example, for this Assessment, two University of Newcastle scholars were consulted about their opinions on the value of the *Lunacy in Many Lands* (1887) volume in the Collection. Professor Catharine Coleborne, Associate Dean Research (Interim), College of Human and Social Futures, University of Newcastle, noted that the book,

... represents an important piece of historical writing about the way psychiatric care and institutions evolved over time. The author, Tucker, was also known for his engagement across places and therefore for what we might call a transnational approach to thinking about mental health care in different places. It is an important work in the wider literature and well known for being so.

... I know different libraries hold the book, but it would be most useful to retain in the collection as a rare book that students and researchers could consult. I used this work in my doctoral research in the mid-1990s and current students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) could have access to it, rather than having to find this book in a state library.

Likewise, Dr Ann Hardy noted the value of this text in the broader context of the history of mental health care in Australia:

Dr. G.A. Tucker's publication, *Lunacy in Many Lands* (1885), holds significant historical and intellectual heritage value for its profound influence on the evolution of mental healthcare in Australia. This report, commissioned by the New South Wales authorities, provided a crucial impetus for the adoption of more humane and rehabilitative approaches, known as moral therapy, in the treatment of individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Based on extensive international research, Tucker's work critiqued prevailing institutional models and championed patient-centred care, directly impacting the development of mental health facilities and practices in NSW and beyond. Its significance lies in its role as a pivotal document that contributed to a paradigm shift away from purely medical or custodial models towards a more holistic understanding of care.

Dr Ann Hardy
Co-ordinator, GLAMx and Digitisation Projects
Hunter (Living) History Initiative
University of Newcastle

Library users and Hunter-New England community

The Collection is currently accessible to staff and tertiary students of the HNE LHD, who enjoy the opportunity to view a sample of the collection objects and books while visiting the Calvary Mater Hospital library. The general public, including the local community, are currently unable to access this important collection, due to the closed status of the library's resources, but there is obvious potential for future digitisation to make the Collection accessible to a wider audience online. The Hunter-New England community, including descendants of hospital staff and patients, would most likely have great interest in this important collection, once its existence is made known via an online catalogue.

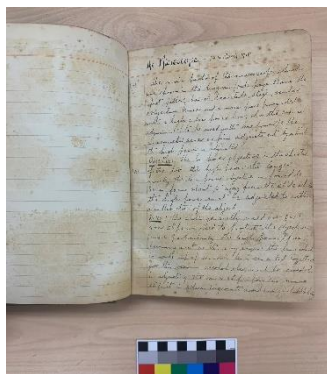
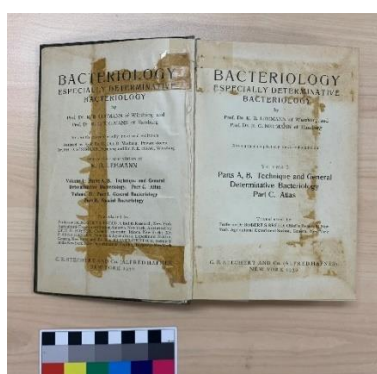
Condition of the Collection

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection sighted for this Assessment is generally in very good to excellent condition. It is evident that careful attention has been paid to proper housing and management of the collection, by the professional staff of the HNE Health Libraries. With future funding and ongoing efforts towards best practice storage, conservation and display, the good condition of the Collection will be maintained.

At the time of the site visit for this Assessment, the collection was temporarily stored in the office area of the HNE Health Library in the Calvary Mater Hospital, Waratah, NSW, with some objects presented on open display in the library. When the Collection was relocated from the Gardiner Library, the books and many of the medical instruments and equipment were carefully wrapped in bubble wrap, secured with sticky tape, and these items were stored in cardboard archive boxes. The Collection benefits from the temperature- and humidity-controlled conditions in the library.

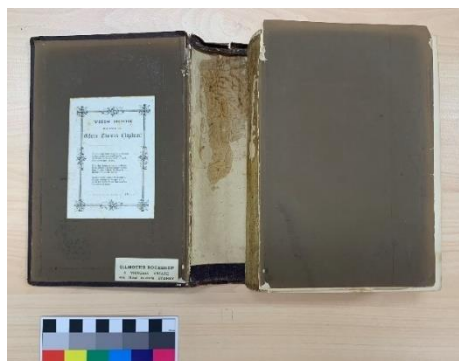
Acid damage

Most of the books in the Collection are in very good, stable condition, however a small number of items have areas of damage caused by acids in the paper, cardboard, binding glue and sticky tape used in the past for repairs and covering.



Book bindings

A couple of books have their bindings and covers detached (see below), making these volumes fragile and difficult to handle without causing further damage.



Original condition

Generally, the condition of items in the Collection relates to their use as reference books or items that have been regularly used, and they now carry wear and tear damage relating to this regular use. Unless the damage is preventing the object from being safely handled, displayed or understood, or posing a risk of further damage, this wear and tear should be considered part of the history of the object and should be retained. An example of this is the *Home Handbook of Hygiene and Medicine* (see below), which has signs of wear and tear to the spine, cover and pages, and has an old repair of stitching of the front cover to the spine – all of which are important signs of the history of the book as an object.



Storage materials

The bubble wrap, sticky tape and elastic bands used to wrap and transport the Collection have kept items clean and safe from exposure to light and damage. However, for the long-term storage of these items, the bubble wrap should be replaced with acid free materials such as acid free cardboard lidded boxes for individual books and/or custom-made cardboard covers/envelopes and acid free tissue paper. In one or two cases, the sticky tape stuck to the book covers and papers (see example below) – indicating the risk that tape poses to damaging paper-based objects. Rubber bands and sticky tape should be replaced with cotton tape.



The group of slides owned by Professor Walters have been carefully stored in appropriate sleeves with pockets for slides, making the images easier to view and keeping them in their excellent condition. The accompanying original slide boxes have been retained and stored together with the folder of slides.



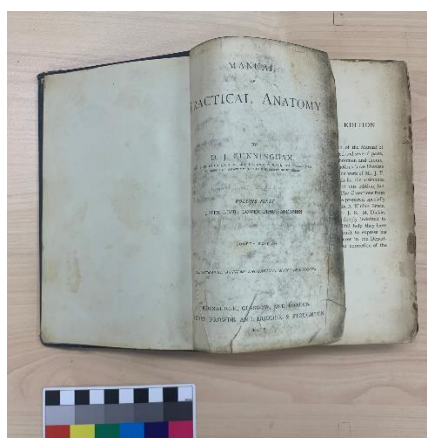
Silverfish

At the time of the site visit, one live and one dead silverfish were sighted among the books. There did not appear to be any obvious sign of recent silverfish damage to any of the books, but the spine of Hunter's 'Practical Zoology' notebook appears to have old silverfish damage. Another item which seems to have old silverfish damage is the Anthony Hordern's paper label on the back of the framed etching by E. Warner of the University of Sydney Medical School (1924).



Mould

A few books in the Collection show stains and damage on the inside pages from mould growth in the past, for example the title page of *Manual of Practical Anatomy* (see below).



Long-term display

Several robust collection items are on open display in the Mater Library (including steel and wooden ECT machines and a straitjacket) but there was no obvious sign of damage from handling or dust accumulation. Many of the books in the Collection have been on long-term display in the Gardiner Library, and these may have suffered some fading due to long-term light exposure, from UV in natural light or room and showcase lights. Another objects which may be suffering from light exposure is the 1880 plan of the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane, which currently hangs in one of the Mater Hospital library offices.

Comparative collections

Numerous collections across Australia hold rare books about medicine and examples of common types of medical equipment, such as those in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection. However, the items in the HNE Collection are (mostly) clearly linked to known individuals and their careers, whereas many examples in other collections have no recorded provenance.

The following list presents collections around Australia and in the UK and US with historical rare books and historical medical equipment like those in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection. The research for comparative collections for this Assessment focused on books, documents and plaques relating to John Irvine Hunter, other examples of rare books held in the HNE Collection, and medical instruments and equipment such as obstetrics instruments, ECT machines and straitjackets.

John Irvine Hunter collections

University of Sydney Library Rare Book Collection

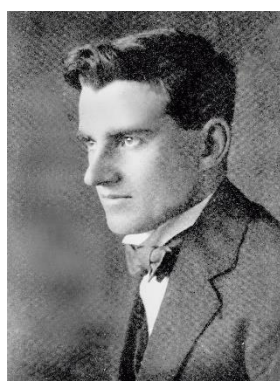
<https://www.library.sydney.edu.au/visit/rare-books-and-special-collections>

The University of Sydney library holds two books from the professional library of JIH, donated to the library by Professor David Hunter (JIH's grandson) after the death of his father, Irvine John Hunter. These two books, which are stamped (or signed) on the inside cover page by John Irvine Hunter, are: William Ostler, *The principles and practice of medicine: designed for the use of practitioners and students of medicine* (1916) and Henry Gray, *Anatomy, descriptive and applied* (1916).⁵³

University of Sydney Archives

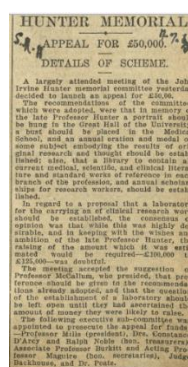
<https://archives-search.sydney.edu.au>

The University of Sydney Archives holds a few items incidental items relating to John Irvine Hunter, including a copy portrait photograph, two oral history audio recordings of Harry Maynard Rennie and Hubert Keith Porter (students of Medicine in the 1920s who talk about being taught by John Irvine Hunter); and a copy of the Calendar of the University of Sydney from 1923, in which he is mentioned (e.g., below image of article re Professorship),⁵⁴ a newspaper clipping re the erection of JIH's memorial plaque in the Great Hall, in a 'News Cuttings on the Carillon' scrap books from 1923-5.



*Chair of Anatomy. **

23. In December last the Senate unanimously decided to promote Associate Professor John Irvine Hunter to the full Chair of Anatomy, which has been vacant since the departure of Professor J. T. Wilson to Cambridge. Professor Hunter has had a very distinguished academic career, having graduated in March, 1920, with First Class Honours and the University Medal, after securing the first place in all his preceding examinations. Since graduation he has done original work that has received the highest praise from such authorities as Professors Grafton Elliot-Smith and J. T. Wilson. The recognition of Dr. Hunter's exceptional ability and attainments induced Professor Wilson to recommend the Senate to appoint him as Associate Professor of Anatomy in 1921. In this position he proved himself the possessor of great gifts as a teacher. In 1921 the Senate granted Dr. Hunter leave of absence to visit England, Europe and America. Whilst abroad he has done anthropological work with Professor Elliot-Smith, in the University of London, and made neurological investigations at the Brain Institute in Amsterdam. The opinion of the European authorities with whom he was thus brought in contact confirms the opinion of those who have known him in Sydney that he will be a worthy successor to Professor Wilson.



⁵³https://sydney.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991032087996905106&context=L&vid=61USYD_INST:sydney&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&isFrbr=true&tab=Everything&query=title,contains,principles%20practice%20medicine%20designed%20for%20use%20practitioners%20students%20medicine.AND&query=creator,contains,osler%20william%20sir.AND&sortby=rank&mode=advanced&offset=0

⁵⁴<https://archives-search.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/47658?keywords=john+irvine+hunter&type=all&highlights=Wylqb2huliwiaXJ2aW5liiwiiaHVudGVyIj0%3D&lsk=aab4617cc46961ba90a5c7ee8f024463>

J.T. Wilson Museum, University of Sydney

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/about/our-museums/jt-wilson-museum.html>

The J.T. Wilson Museum holds a collection of prosections of the human body, including specimens that were collected as early as 1908. This collection is used for teaching purposes, and it is likely that some of the earliest specimens from the period 1908-1920s relate to Professor John Irvine Hunter - some may have been collected by him through his work as a prosector of specimens at the university, and they may also have been used in his anatomy lectures and demonstrations.

University of Sydney Art Collection

https://www.sydney.edu.au/museums/collections_search/

The University of Sydney Art Collection contains two portraits of JIH - a 1929 portrait oil painting of Hunter (UA1927.4, below left) by artist Sir John Longstaff (Australian painter, war artist and five-time winner of the Archibald Prize for portraiture), and a 1929 portrait oil painting of Hunter (UA1929.1) by W. B. McInnes (painter, portraitist, teacher and Acting Director of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1934). These portraits were commissioned by the University and the McInnes portrait was restored in 1990.



Wesley College, University of Sydney

<https://www.wesleycollege-usyd.edu.au>

A bronze memorial to John Irvine Hunter is installed in the entrance hall of Wesley College at the University of Sydney. This was sculpted by Rayner Hoff, who also designed the ANZAC memorial, Hyde Park and the logo for Holden. Though the size and framing are different, the design of the sculpted portrait of Hunter in this plaque at Wesley College is identical to that on the plaque in the HNELHD collection, confirming it was also sculpted by Rayner Hoff.



Fort Street High School

Petersham, NSW

<https://fortstreet-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/about-our-school/school-history-and-archives.html>

Another of the large, inscribed bronze memorial plaque sculpted by Rayner Hoff, is installed in the Fort Street High School library, similar in design to that at Wesley College. This was one of the two large John Irvine Hunter memorial plaques made by Rayner Hoff in October-November 1915.



Trainor Owen Collection

Royal Australian and NZ College of Radiologists

<https://ehive.com/collections/5079/trainor-owen-collection>

This collection contains a sepia copy of the studio portrait photograph of John Irvine Hunter. Markings on the back include: '58 (top left), '40%' (top right), 'H3575.1' (old accession number).



Rare Medical Book collections

British Library and Wellcome Collection

London, UK

<https://www.bl.uk/>

<https://wellcomecollection.org/collections>

Both the British Library and the Wellcome Collection in London hold copies of many of the rare medical books in the HNE collection, including the titles in John Irvine Hunter's personal library.

Exeter Cathedral historical collection
Exeter, UK

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/news-events/latest-news/william-smellie-apothecary-man-midwife-and-the-father-of-british-obstetrics/>

The Cathedral Library holds 12 books by UK 'man-widwife' and father of British obstetrics William Smellie, as well as related works and letters, some referring to the impropriety of wooden forceps and the absurdity of his method of teaching and practising midwifery.

Newcastle Mental Hospital & medical instrument collections

University of Newcastle Library Special Collections – James Fletcher Hospital archive

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/category/james-fletcher-hospital/>

This library and archives collection includes three original glass plate negatives from 1888 in the Ralph Snowball collection, relating to the James Fletcher Hospital. One (below left) is a view across the Newcastle Government Domain from Watt Street towards Newcomen and Church Streets, and another (below centre) is a view of the Women's Asylum, Watt Street, Newcastle. The third (below right) is a view of the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane, Watt St, Newcastle (1888). The collection also holds Newcastle Hospital annual reports, 1916-1923.⁵⁵



Newcastle & Hunter District Historical Society
Newcastle, NSW

This collection appears to hold a Plan of the Hospital for the Insane, Newcastle, December 2nd, 1880, plan by Government Architect Barnet, like the one in the HNE Collection.⁵⁶ It is unknown if this is an original plan or a facsimile.

Morisset Hospital Museum
Morisset, NSW

<https://aumuseums.com/nsw/morisset-hospital-historical-society>

This collection includes objects relating to the history of Morisset Hospital, a former psychiatric hospital in the Newcastle region. At the time of writing this report, the collection was maintained by the Morisset Hospital Historical Society, but plans were underway to transfer the bulk of the collection to be managed by Lake Macquarie City Council. Morisset Hospital opened to patients in 1909, and by 1930

⁵⁵ Newcastle Hospital (NSW), *Newcastle Hospital annual reports with a list of contributions & donations, 1916-1923 (incomplete)*, [B10831]. Living Histories, accessed 30/04/2025, <https://livinghistories.newcastle.edu.au/nodes/view/108232>

⁵⁶ Barnet, James, *Plan of the Hospital for the Insane, Newcastle, 2 December 1880* (2nd December 1880), [M4831]. Living Histories, accessed 30/04/2025, <https://livinghistories.newcastle.edu.au/nodes/view/83713>

was re-established as an asylum for the criminally insane. The proximity to the Newcastle Mental Hospital suggests there was a likely a local-historical relationship between the two institutions, within the context of mental health care in the Hunter New England region. Medical objects in the collection relate to treatment and care of psychiatric patients of Morisset hospital, including straitjackets (camisoles), ECT machines (about 5) and numerous other items relating to the treatment are care of psychiatric patients.

*Psychiatric Services Collection, Museums Victoria
Melbourne, Victoria*

<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/1587#:~:text=The%20Psychiatric%20Services%20Collection%20is.and%20lack%20of%20political%20will.>

This collection of over 1600 items includes historical material from 1870 to 1980 relating to the treatment and care of psychiatric patients in Victoria, including several straitjackets, ECT machines, and restraints, which offer excellent comparison with these types of objects in the HNE Collection.



*Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
Sydney, NSW*

<https://collection.powerhouse.com.au>

This extensive collection holds some items relating to obstetrics, but no surgical instruments like those in the HNE collection. It does, however, hold an ECT machine used at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital (below left), two Magneto Electric Machines, numerous monocular microscopes, a straitjacket used at Kenmore Hospital, Goulburn in the 1950s, like those in the HNE Collection.



Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Museum
Camperdown, NSW

<https://slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/rpa-museum>

This collection includes 6000 objects relating to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital cultural heritage including photographs, medical equipment, medical journals, department records, hospital board minutes, nursing uniforms, nursing educational material and more. This collection holds some interesting comparative objects relating to obstetrics and anaesthetics, microscopes and medical books, like those in the HNE collection.

Society for Preservation of Artefacts of Surgery and Medicine (SPASM)
Gladesville, NSW

<http://www.spasmmuseum.org.au/collection.html>

This volunteer managed collection includes 7000 objects, documents, photographs, portraits and books used in hospitals, operating theatres and general practice in Australia, including items specifically related to the old Tarban Creek Asylum. This collection would certainly hold some key objects of comparison with those held in the HNE Collection, but the absence of a collection catalogue makes access difficult to identify the items of most relevance.

Texas Medical Center Library
Houston, Texas, US

<https://library.tmc.edu/mcgovern/2011/09/15/jones-motor-basal-metabolism-tester-1937/>

This library collection holds a Jones Motor Basal Metabolism Tester, very similar to that held in the HNE Collection.

Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne
Melbourne, VIC

<https://medicalhistorymuseum.mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/>

The University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine Museums collection holds a variety of comparative material, including monocular microscopes and a haemocytometer, a magento-electric machine (1885), like the examples in the HNE Collection.



Harry Daly Museum of Anaesthetics
Edgecliff, NSW

<https://ehive.com/collections/4493/objects/351171/cautery-device>

This collection includes a cautery device in a wooden case, made by Rodman and Kelaher – the same makers of the machine in the HNE Collection.



Several other medical museums around Australia may also hold comparative medical instruments and equipment, including the Western Australian Medical Museum, Subiaco, WA; Fremantle Hospital Museum; Royal Perth Hospital Museum and the Health Museum of South Australia.

Aboriginal baby in coolamon sculpture examples

A couple of examples of a baby in a coolamon artwork were identified. One, which is another wood carving (below left) (30 x 12 cm), was made by Robert Wuldi, and sold at auction in recent years.⁵⁷ Robert Wuldi is a Ngarrindjeri artist, whose art practice includes theatre, film, television, painting, works on paper and sculpture.⁵⁸ Another, a ceramic figurine, by artist Pat Elvins (below right),⁵⁹ was for sale in Ebay.com at the time of writing this report. Pat Elvins (a non-indigenous artist) studied at the Geelong Technical School & the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. In 1976 she held an exhibition at 'The Shed' in Alice Springs, featuring some of her works of sculptured cats. Her exhibition in Alice Springs suggests that she was inspired by the carving work of local Aboriginal artists and may have been inspired by the work of Ruben Jangala (who made the carving in the HNE Collection) or another Warlpiri artist, to create the ceramic baby in a coolamon figurine.



⁵⁷ Robert Wuldi, baby in a coolamon hardwood carving, <https://www.carters.com.au/index.cfm/item/796752-robert-wuldi-aboriginal-hardwood-carving-of-baby-in-coolamon-30/>

⁵⁸ Robert Wuldi, https://www.instagram.com/p/CyjbqCXsrgR/?img_index=1

⁵⁹ Baby in a coolamon sculpture by Pat Elvins, <https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/325840672185>

Statement of significance

The HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection is composed of two distinct sub-collections – one being the personal notebooks, scrapbooks and library of Professor John Irvine Hunter of the University of Sydney, and the other half relating to the provision of health care in the Hunter New England region of NSW. The Collection also incorporates some books and objects collected by doctors who worked in this region, but which have no direct historical connection with the area. The Collection includes a diverse range of objects including books, documents, notebooks and scrapbooks, plaques and signs, medical instruments and equipment, photographs, slides and printed ephemera. Considering the evidence presented in this report, the Collection, as a whole, is considered to be of national significance, primarily for the strength of the John Irvine Hunter material, the numerous examples of rare medical books, the material associated with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney (one of Australia's oldest and most important schools of medicine) and several high profile professors and doctors, and the rare and representative objects from the Newcastle Mental Hospital, which played an important role in the development of innovative approaches to mental health care and treatment in Australia. While some comparative books and objects are held in collections in Australia and the UK, the Collection is unique in that the HNE material was owned by known, important individuals, and is provenanced to a university and hospital of historical importance.

Historical significance

The books and objects in the HNE Health Libraries Collection represent an important chapter in the history of teaching and provision of health care in Australia. The Collection has historical significance for its association with several important institutions, including the University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine, the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane/Newcastle Mental Hospital and the John Hunter Hospital. Through these organisations, hundreds of Australian doctors were trained and provided decades of medical treatment, improving the livelihoods of thousands of patients. The collection is significant as it represents important developments in medical scholarship and knowledge, innovative treatments, tertiary teaching methods and innovative approaches to the provision of mental health care and treatment. Many of the books and medical instruments and equipment are significant for their association with important figures in Australian and world medical history, including Emeritus Professor William Walters AM, Dr Samuel Gardiner, and most importantly, Professor John Irvine Hunter – the youngest person ever to be appointed to a professorship at the University of Sydney, and recognised as one of the most prominent and inspiring figures in Australian medical history.

Artistic and aesthetic significance

The HNE Collection holds mainly historical and scientific significance, however, there are items within the collection that have aesthetic merit. These include the baby in the coolamon sculpture by Central Australian Aboriginal artist Ruben Jangala, and several of the rare books, which can be considered significant for the design of their covers, binding and title pages, in addition to the medical illustrations contained within their pages, which reflect the artistic and scientific styles of the periods in which they were created. The illustrations made by John Irvine Hunter in his notebooks are intricately detailed, reflecting Hunter's dedication to scientific rigour as well as having artistic merit and being aesthetically appealing. Much of the medical equipment in the collection, while not necessarily designed with

aesthetics in mind, certainly have aesthetic qualities and can be appreciated for their industrial design, relationship between form and function, and use of materials. The 1880 plan of the Newcastle Hospital for the Insane reflects the architectural aesthetic of government and institutional buildings of the era.

Social, community and spiritual significance

The HNE Collection is socially significant for current and former staff and patients of the Hunter New England region hospitals, tertiary students, academic scholars, the local community, and descendants of the individuals named in the Collection objects. The Collection embodies the history of several important doctors and professors whose work has included important and dedicated service to the Australian community for over 120 years. The objects in the Collection reflect this tireless service to saving lives and improving quality of life, documenting the development and provision of health care for the people of the Hunter region of NSW. Potentially thousands of people have been treated with the objects represented in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection, giving them social significance relating to the influence they had on community health.

Scientific and research significance

The HNE Collection holds enormous scientific significance, as a library of rare and important books on a diverse range of medical topics. It also has great potential to extend research on the history and development of tertiary teaching of medicine, the work of John Irvine Hunter, the provision of obstetrics and gynaecology in the early to mid-twentieth century, and the treatment of mental health through the use of electrical stimulus and restraint at the Newcastle Mental Hospital. It offers fascinating insight, particularly into the historical use of early electrical stimulation machines for therapy, and the subsequent use of electro-convulsive therapy and straitjackets in mental health treatment.

Provenance

Despite the lack of documentation recording provenance and donor details of some collection items, names on books and maker's details have allowed research for this Assessment which has established clearer provenance about many objects. While many of the items in the Collection are copies of books and examples of medical equipment also held in other collections in Australia and the UK, items such as objects in the HNE Collection are significant because they are clearly provenanced to named individuals, and details of their career and use of the objects are known. This additional information substantially increases the significance of these items. The items relating to John Irvine Hunter and the Newcastle Mental Hospital have clear provenance, but, there are also many items in the Collection for which no provenance is known, due to lack of documentation. Many of these, including rare books and electrical stimulation machines remain significant in other aspects, such as rarity and historical significance.

Rarity

Numerous collections in Australia and the UK hold historical medical books and medical equipment, like those in the HNE Collection. However, as a whole, the HNE Collection is rare as a specialised archive of material relating to John Irvine Hunter, and to the provision of medical care in the Hunter New England region. Numerous books in the Collection are rare, both in Australia and worldwide, and many others are rare in Australia. Despite being a facsimile, the Collection's copy of *A Treatise of the*

theory and practice of midwifery by William Smellie (1752, facsimile 1974) appears to be the only copy in a public library in Australia. While some straitjackets and ECT machines are held in the Psychiatric Services Collection of Museums Victoria, those in the HNE Collection are rare and representative examples of this type of item used in the Australian context.

Completeness & condition

Despite the existence of other rare book and items of medical equipment represented in dispersed collections, the HNE Collection includes a comprehensive archive of rare historical medical texts and may be one of the most complete of its kind in Australia. NSW. The straitjacket and ECT machine group in the Collection appears to be one of the largest of its kind in Australia, and the items are in excellent condition. Many of the medical instruments and equipment in the Collection are also in excellent condition and are perhaps some of the best examples of their kind that survive in the collections surveyed for this Assessment.

Interpretive capacity

The range and materials in the HNE Collection and the historical themes they represent are extensive, and they present enormous potential for display and learning. If digitised and made accessible online, the Collection would realise its potential to reach a wide range of stakeholders. The sub-collections allow the HNE Health Libraries to clearly illustrate a range of key historical themes, including the history and approaches to teaching tertiary medical studies, the life and work of Professor John Irvine Hunter, obstetrics, anaesthetics, community health, and the history and development of mental health care in Australia, which are relevant to secondary and tertiary student education and life-long learning.

Most significant items

There are numerous highly significant items in the HNE Health Libraries Historical Collection which deserve in-depth research and individual statements of significance. The following table provides an outline of the most significant items in the collection, according to the Significance 2.0 criteria.

	Primary significance criteria				Comparative significance criteria			
	Historical	Artistic/ aesthetic	Scientific/ research	Social/ spiritual	Provenance	Rarity	Completeness/ condition	Interpretive capacity
John Irvine Hunter notebooks	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
John Irvine Hunter scrapbook/diaries	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Hazel Hunter scrapbook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
John Irvine Hunter memorial plaque	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
John Irvine Hunter books	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>The Ancient physician's legacy to his country (1790s)</i>	X		X		X	X	X	X
<i>Lunacy in Many Lands (1887)</i>	X		X		X	X	X	X
<i>A Treatise of the theory and practice of midwifery (1752, facs.1974)</i>	X		X		X	X	X	X
<i>Baby in a coolamon sculpture</i>	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
<i>The essays or Councils, Civil and Moral of Francis Bacon (1696)</i>	X		X			X	X	X
<i>Medical and Chemical Essays (1795)</i>	X		X			X	X	X
Ophthalmoscope, Theodore Hamblin, London, owned by Dr Partington	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Basal Metabolism Testing Machine			X			X	X	X
magneto-electric machine, late 19thC	X		X		X	X	X	X
magneto-electric machine, Rodman & Kelaher, early 20thC	X		X		X	X	X	X
Straitjackets, Newcastle Mental Hospital	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Restraint belt, Newcastle Mental Hospital	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ECT machines, Newcastle Mental Hospital	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Building plan, Newcastle Hospital for the Insane (1880)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Training School Registration Certificate, 1926, Newcastle Mental Hospital	X		X		X	X	X	X

Recommendations

Activity	Priority
Collection management and documentation	
Seek further funding for collection management tasks listed below.	High
Seek funding for a collection management professional to create a Collections Policy for the historical collection.	High
Review and refine the collection acquisition process; create forms for donations.	High
Ensure all information about donor and provenance is collected for all future acquisitions.	High
Assign accession numbers to all collection items, and label them with their catalogue numbers.	High
Create a collection register to document all new acquisitions and donations to the collection.	High
Identify items from group donations and store/display them together.	High
Create a digital collection catalogue, either in a simple Excel spreadsheet (with the following fields: catalogue number, object name, brief description, storage location, current location, condition, notes) or by purchasing proprietary collections management software. Be sure to update the locations in the spreadsheet when items are moved.	High
Add copies of the research information in this Assessment report to the relevant objects' catalogue worksheets and to the records in the digital catalogue.	Medium
Create physical and/or digital object files for collection items (containing research about the objects, donation forms, conservation/restoration files, etc.) and store the files in a central location. Begin with the most significant items identified in this report	Medium
Conduct further historical research into the most highly significant items identified in this report and create statements of significance, for use in future interpretation and education resources.	Low
Conservation and storage	
Engage a professional conservator to undertake a preservation needs assessment.	High
Engage a paper conservator to undertake any necessary treatment of books with detached Spines and covers.	Medium
Consult a conservator for advice on treating the book collection for silverfish.	High
Remove all sticky tape from the wrapped books as a temporary measure to prevent any risk of the tape getting stuck and damaging the covers and pages	High
Replace bubble wrap with acid free tissue and acid free cardboard boxes and book cases.	High

Organisational	
If not already aware, ensure that HNE LHD senior managers are made aware of the significance and needs of the collection.	High
Ensure that the collection and its needs are mentioned in the organisation's annual report and planning documents.	High
Access and digitisation	
Once all objects have been catalogued, consider photographing the the collection, using best-practice approach to photographing historical objects.	Medium
Consider making the collection available online, via a shared platform such as EHive.	High
Research	
Conduct further research (where needed) (and create object files with historic images, etc.) for items of significance identified in this Assessment.	High
Interpretation and display	
Display objects in groups relating to the individuals who used and owned them.	High
When possible, do not display collection items on open display, to prevent fading from long-term UV exposure, dust accumulation, damage from handling by visitors, and theft.	High
Do not place original photos or documents on long-term display - use only reproductions.	High
To prevent damage from long-term display, use appropriate low UV lighting, and rotate original items on and off display.	High
Collection development	
Establish a clear collecting policy and do not accept objects that do not relate to the themes Stated in the policy.	High
Deaccession	
Consider deaccessioning any items which do not relate to the themes and criteria stated in the Collecting policy.	Low